MO SALAH • TRENT • KEVIN KEEGAN'S 70TH • BEN DAVIES • OZAN KABAK • WIN A SIGNED ROBBO BOOK



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BIG BEN ARRIVES IN TIME

You wait all month for a centre-back and then two come along at once. Introducing Ben Davies and Ozan Kabak...

Virgil van Dijk. Long-term injury. Joe Gomez. Long-term injury. And now Joel Matip is ruled out for the season. Have you ever known anything like it?

To lose all three senior central defenders to serious injuries at the same time is something Jürgen Klopp has never had to deal with before, but problems need solutions and when you've got Michael Edwards as Sporting Director there will always be answers.

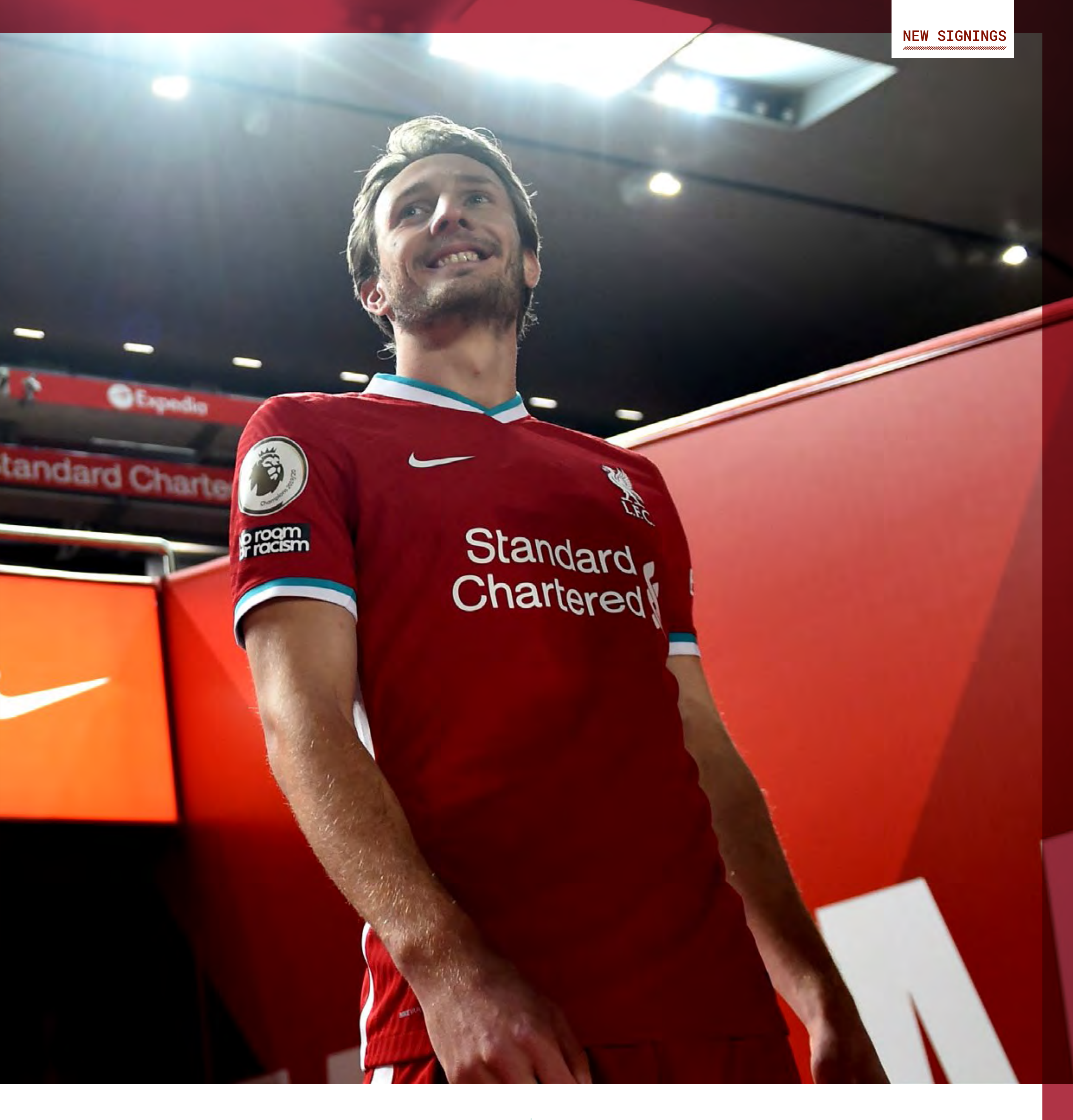
The inexperienced Nat Phillips and Rhys Williams have both done jobs at centre-back while Fabinho and Jordan Henderson have filled in so well it was easily forgotten that they are central midfielders, but the risk of also losing some – or all – of them to injury could not be ignored.

On the final day of the January transfer window, Ben Davies became the first Preston North End player to sign for Liverpool since the 1960s and Klopp was typically honest about his arrival.

"What I like about Ben is it just shows that each situation creates opportunities," said the Liverpool manager. "I think it's probably clear that in a normal transfer window, without any issues, we would not look at Preston if there's a player for us or something like that. It's not really likely.

"But since we saw him and since our situation got clearer and clearer – the problems we had – when we saw him we got really excited about it and thought 'Wow'.

"He's a boy who played his whole life for Preston, is around the corner pretty much. We see the potential really. We see the quality and we see the potential as well because he's 25 and there's a lot to come for him."



WE SEE THE POTENTIAL AS WELL BECAUSE HE'S 25 AND THERE'S A LOT TO COME FOR HIM

Born in Barrow – the town Emlyn Hughes came from – in 1995, Davies joined Preston's youth system aged 11. He worked his way through the ranks and made his first-team debut at the age of 17 in 2013.

The left-footed centre-back, who stands at 6ft 1ins tall, spent most of the following four seasons out on loan at York City, Tranmere Rovers, Southport, Newport County and Fleetwood Town before breaking into the PNE team in 2017/18 under the management of Alex Neil.

Davies finished that campaign as Preston's Young Player of the Year and was named as the Sir Tom Finney Player of the Year in 2018/19. In total, Ben made 145 appearances for the Lilywhites, scoring twice, and is now absolutely delighted to be a Liverpool player having progressed significantly during his time at Deepdale.

"I think in The Championship, especially this season, I've felt more and more comfortable playing there and I can get through games, not

I WANT TO COME IN AND PLAY GAMES TO START WITH, I WANT TO GET MY FOOT IN THE DOOR AND MAKE MYSELF A PREMIER LEAGUE PLAYER RATHER THAN OBVIOUSLY A CHAMPIONSHIP PLAYER



with ease but fairly comfortably," he told LFCTV.

"I think now, regardless of where I was going to go, I was going to look to move on to get a new challenge. For it to be here, with the league champions, is obviously a bit surreal at the minute, but it's something that I'm really going to get my teeth into and look forward to.

"It's a huge opportunity. Obviously it came as a bit of a surprise when it first came out, but once you start to get your head around it, the opportunity that is in front of me is incredible and I'd be silly to let it wash up or not make the most of it."

Although he played against the Reds in the second half of a pre-season friendly at Deepdale in 2014 – Suso and Kristoffer Peterson scoring for Liverpool in a 2-1 win – Ben had never even been to Anfield before, let alone played at the home of the Champions. Now, wearing the no28 shirt, he's aiming to quickly establish himself as a Liverpool player.

"I'd never actually been to Anfield," he said at his unveiling. "I've had a quick look at the pitch and it looks like carpet. I'm keen to have a proper look around and then hopefully over the next sort of week or two weeks it'll sink in and then become more regular.

"I want to come in and play games to start with, I want to get my foot in the door and make myself a Premier League player rather than obviously a Championship player.

"I know we've got some top players here and players I can certainly learn from. Once you get your foot in the door then you're here as well. Hopefully I can take my chance."

Naturally, Davies is looking forward to working with Klopp – "his enthusiasm and what he gets out of his players week in, week out...the intensity is brilliant and it's kind of one of those things where you just want to be part of it," – and the Liverpool manager feels the same way.

"I love a lot about his play. He's a really good footballer, looks like a proper leader in this Preston team, good in challenges, looks football smart, can play different positions because he played in a back three and a back four and all these things.

"That makes him really interesting so I'm really looking forward to working with him. I know for him it's an opportunity and I see it exactly the same for us.

"We could have asked and he said, 'I'd prefer to stay at Preston or go somewhere else where I play 40-odd games per season'. So this is a challenge, but it's an opportunity – a big, big opportunity. I see it exactly like that.

"We have centre-halves and what we have to bring in is different qualities and that we are all really ready for the challenges ahead of us.

"It can be a wonderful story and it's all about Ben and me to make sure this story will be really great."



KABAK AT THE BACK

It was December 2018 when Ozan Kabak, then an 18-year-old at Galatasaray, tweeted a photo of himself holding a Liverpool shirt signed by Virgil van Dijk.

Now aged 20, and capped seven times by Turkey, the centre-back could one day find himself lining up alongside his hero after joining Liverpool on loan from Schalke 04 with the option of a permanent transfer to follow.

Born in Ankara, Kabak progressed through the Galatasaray ranks and made 14 first-team appearances before moving to Germany to sign for Stuttgart in January 2019. After just 17 games he was named as Bundesliga Rookie of the Season and signed for Schalke the day before former Huddersfield Town boss David Wagner – a close friend of Jürgen Klopp – was appointed as manager.

"Yes, Dave was already very, very positive about him," Klopp told Liverpoolfc.com after the loan move for Kabak was announced. "He came very young to Germany and everybody was clear he was a massive talent.

"He is only 20 now. He plays in his second club at Schalke and unfortunately they are in a bad position in the moment. For him, I think it's a really good moment to make the move because, like each player in the world, you need a stable team around you and that's what we can deliver.

"We deliver a stable team and you can play your position, you don't have to be 20 and not allowed to make mistakes anymore. He's really a big, big talent and we are really looking forward to working with him.

"Dave always said he will be a future captain of a team. He is a proper personality. He could have gone anywhere but he wanted to make football steps and we are a proper football step for him. He wants to learn, but he can deliver already."

Kabak, who will wear the no19 shirt, is excited to meet his hero and believes he is suited to playing for the Reds.

"Virgil van Dijk, I think, is the best centre-back in the world. He's strong, he's good, he's so fast, he's clever. That's why I see him as an idol and can't wait to meet him.

"My target is to be a top player. I need to improve a lot. I want to show myself and I want to play.

"Liverpool play offensive football and press high. Sometimes they leave some space in the back so I think Liverpool centre-backs need to be fast. I think I suit it in this way. I think I suit Liverpool very well.

"To the fans, I want them to support me and believe in me. I will give my everything. Liverpool was my childhood team so it's a dream for me. Now the dream comes true."

> I WILL GIVE EVERYTHING. LIVERPOOL WAS MY CHILDHOOD TEAM SO IT'S A DREAM FOR ME

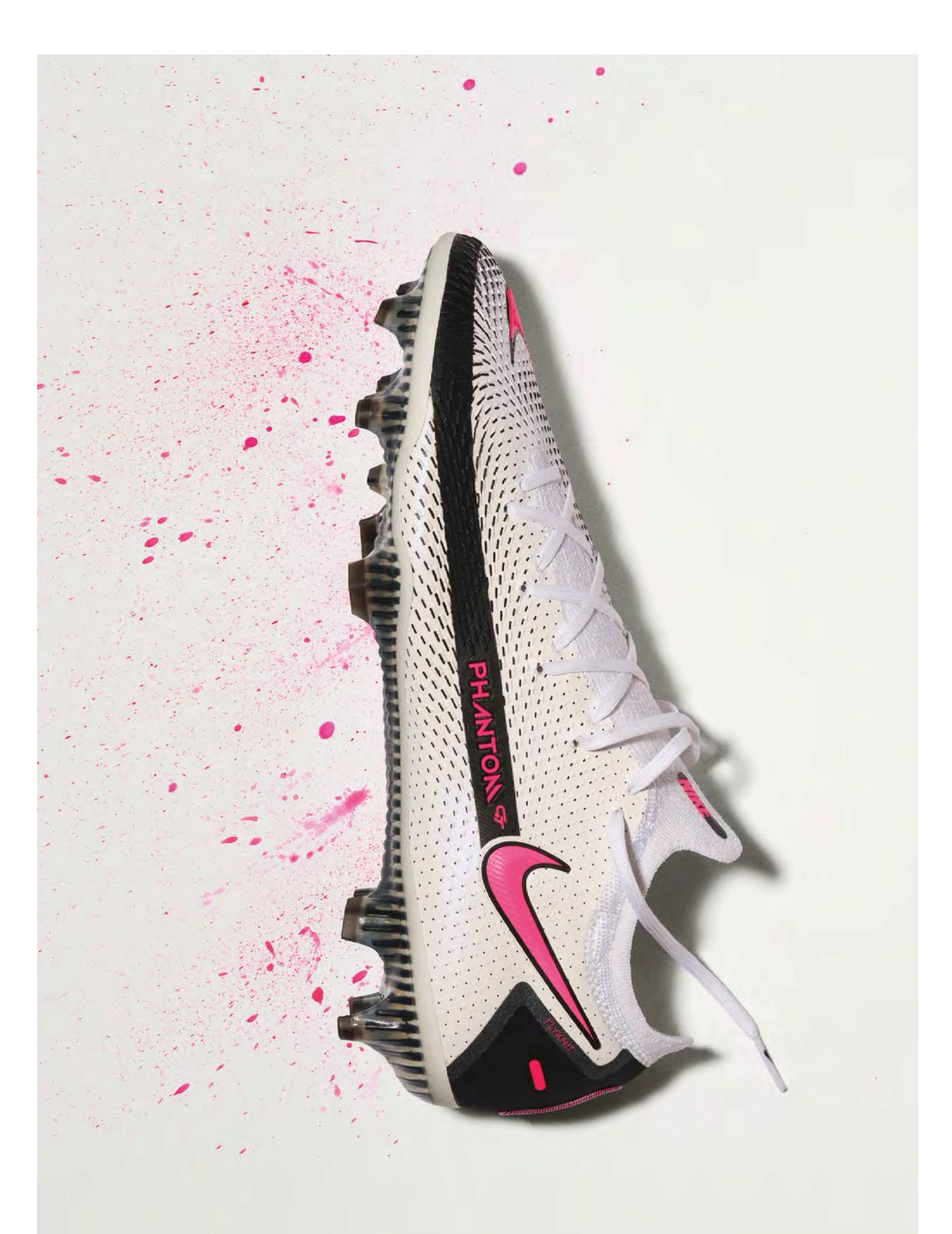


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POSITIVE *Vibes*

It was a tough start to 2021 for Liverpool, but THIAGO ALCANTARA is always looking on the bright side. Our Spanish midfielder talks tactics, dynamics, transition and team-mates...



Words: Chris McLoughlin

They called it #ThiagoFriday on social media. The day in September when Thiago Alcantara was announced as a Liverpool player.

'How are we?' said the Spanish international in his best Scouse accent down the lens of a LFCTV camera. Buzzing, lad. Buzzing.

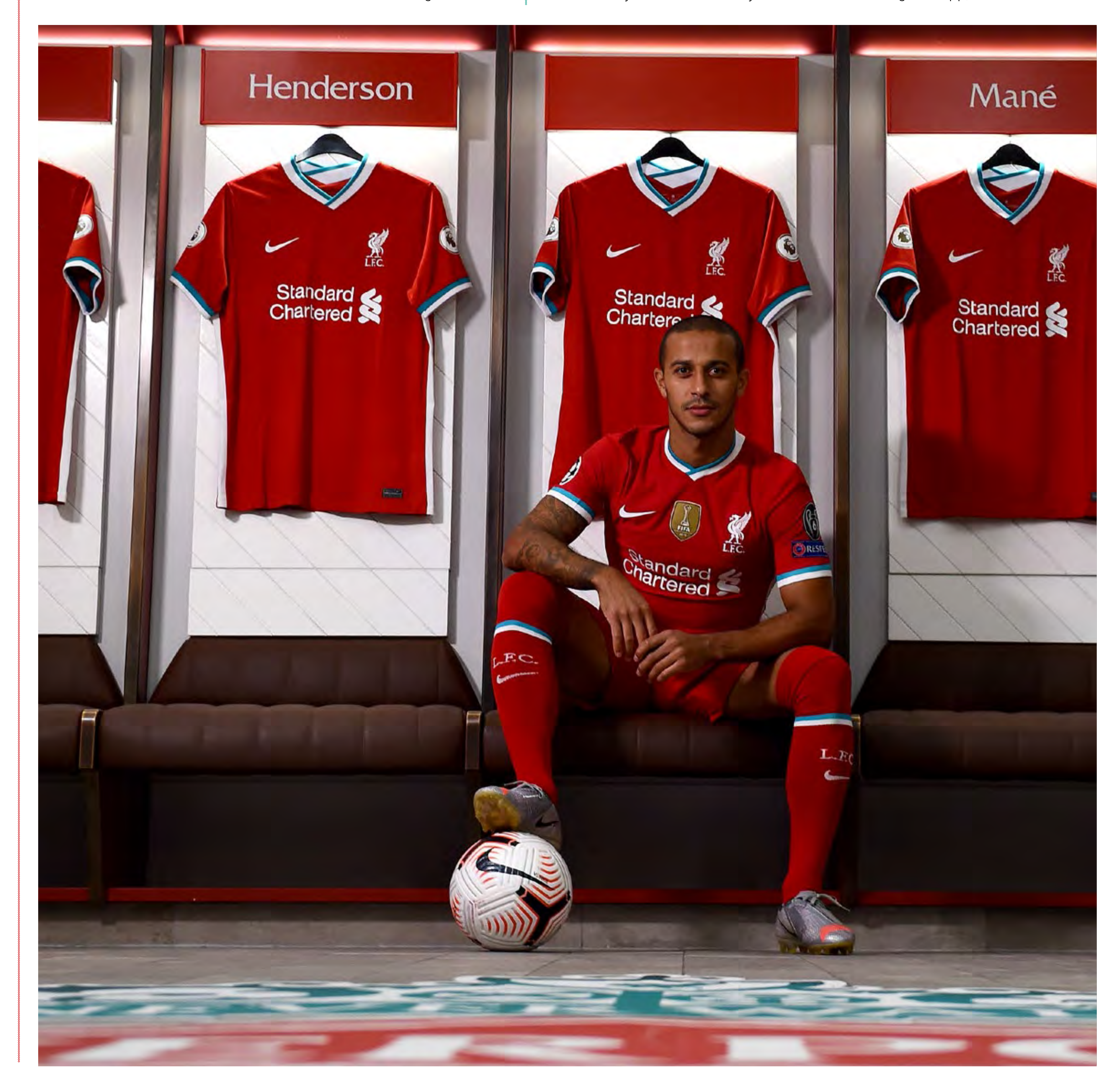
Two days later, at Stamford Bridge, Thiago came on at half-time to make his Liverpool debut. He instantly ran things from midfield and Sadio Mane scored twice give the Champions a 2-0 victory. Everything looked rosy, but if Thiago had asked 'how are we' heading into Liverpool's game at Spurs four months later, the early season positivity would have been less evident.

There's no denying it. Most of January 2021 sucked.

With the nation in lockdown and the doors of Anfield again closed, Liverpool hit their first real run of bad form since 2017. The goals dried up, wins became rarer than seeing a plane in the sky and the Reds exited the FA Cup at the hands of our biggest rivals. After spending the last three years elsewhere, the depressing duo of doom and gloom reared their ugly heads again down Anfield Road while social media melted down quicker than the snow Storm Christoph brought with him.

Yet then came heartening 3-1 wins at Tottenham and West Ham. As every Kopite worth his or her salt knows, at the end of the storm is a golden sky. Thiago is the kind of supremely talented footballer who can provide it.

On the day he signed for Liverpool he also saw the impressively quickly produced "Thiaaaaaago, Thiago Alcantaaaaaara' song and video, a reworking of The Gibson Brothers' 1978 hit 'Cuba'. Seeing his head superimposed onto the body of a woman in a yellow dress while Jürgen Klopp,



I LOVE IT. IT IS VERY FUNNY AND THE VIDEO IS AMAZING. IT GIVES ME POSITIVE VIBES

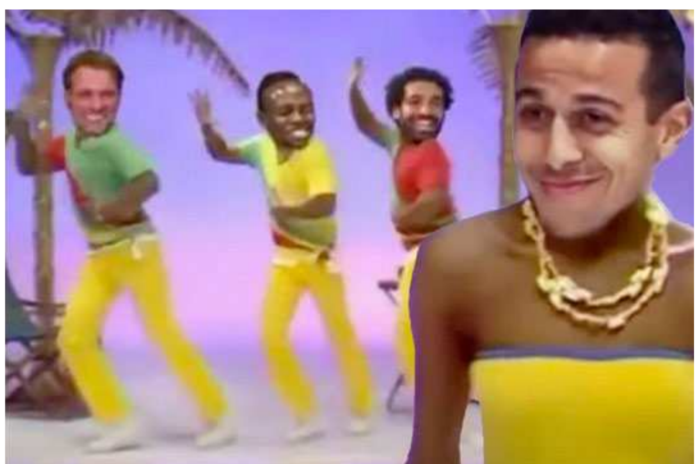
Sadio Mane and Mo Salah danced by palm trees may not have been the welcome the former Bayern Munich midfielder had anticipated on Merseyside, but it went down well.

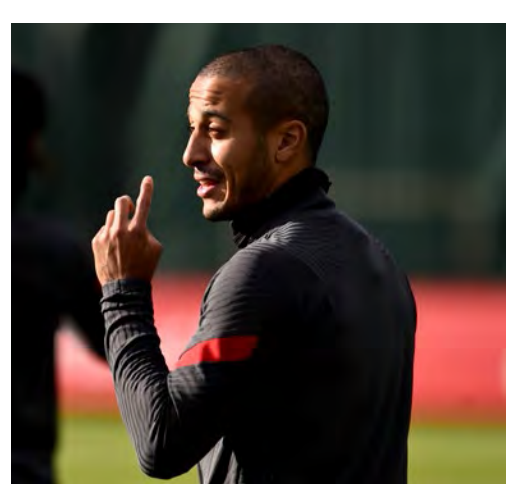
"I love it," he said. "It is very funny and the video is amazing. It gives me positive vibes." So, having enjoyed those positive vibes from Liverpool supporters in September, Thiago is ready to send some back at a time when results on the pitch haven't always provided them.

"We still have a chance for the Premier League," he says as he reflects on January's results. "We still have a chance for the Champions League as well so we are very focused. We have this hunger inside that we want to win the first game that comes right now and we want to overcome the situation."

Liverpool were the only team to have scored in every Premier League game until the 0-0 draw at Newcastle in late December. It triggered a barren run in the league with Southampton (0-1),









IF YOU LOOK BACK AT THOSE SIX GAMES, HOW MANY OF THEM DID WE DESERVE TO WIN? MOST OF THEM WE DESERVED TO WIN, BUT AT THE END IT IS FOOTBALL

Manchester United (0-0) and Burnley (0-1) all shutting the Reds out. Yet despite the lack of goals and disappointing results, Thiago believes Liverpool's performances in those games – plus the draw at home to West Brom and FA Cup defeat at Old Trafford – should have resulted in a number of wins.

"It's just about the dynamic," he says. "Football is about dynamics. You have this situation where you can't score a goal, but you can shoot 50 times and score five goals and you're a force.

"Football is like that with the dynamic that everybody wants to change to be positive, to have this high energy. We want to have it and if you look back at those games...you watch the games and you say okay, how many of those six games did we deserve to win?

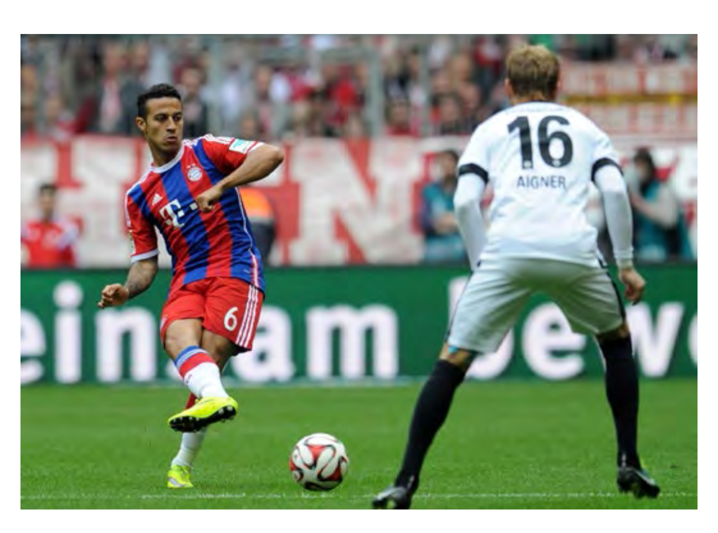
"It's not about playing better or to play worse, it's about deserving to win. Most of them we deserved to win, but at the end it is football.

"In football you can play awful and you can win, or you can play like never before and lose, so it's a bit of taking your chances in the right moment when you create opportunities, and to be clear with the idea of what's going right and what's going wrong and go for it. I think we are now on this path."

Thiago speaks from experience. While his glittering CV shows that he won La Liga titles with Barcelona in 2010/11 and 2012/13 followed by seven consecutive Bundesliga titles with Bayern Munich from 2013/14 to 2019/20 – plus a couple of European Cups – it doesn't tell the full story.

In 2018/19, for instance, FCB had a spell where they won only two of eight league games and found themselves fifth in the table going into December, before recovering to win the title.

Last season, a 5-1 defeat to Eintracht Frankfurt in early November resulted in coach Niko Kovac losing his job and a month later, following defeats to Bayer Leverkusen and Borussia Moenchengladbach, Bayern were seventh in the Bundesliga table




Henderson
L.F.C.
Champions 2019/20

– seven points off the top with half of the season played.

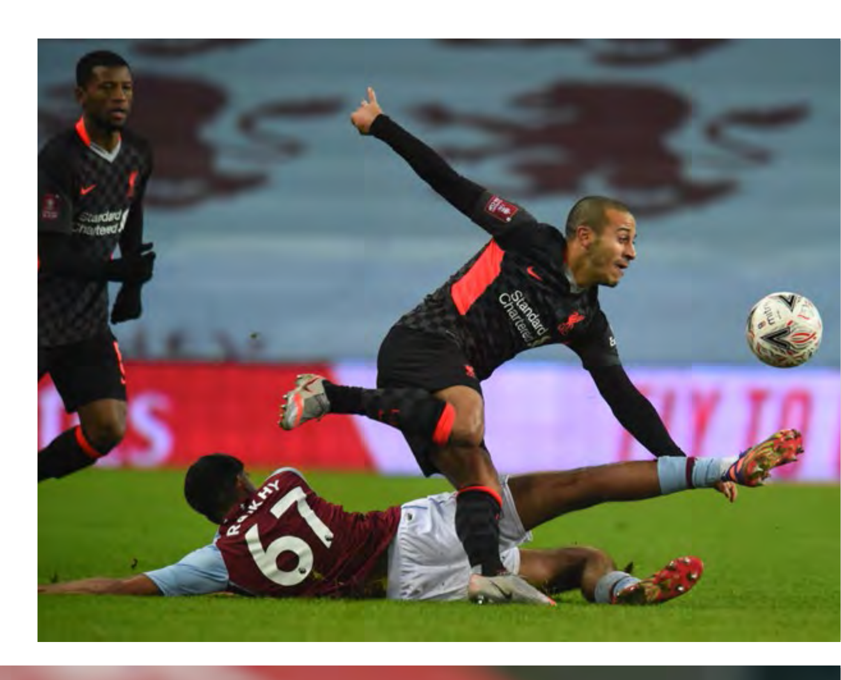
Some viewed them as a spent force, but under the management of Hansi Flick they responded by winning 17 of the next 18 to turn a seven-point deficit into a title win by 13 points. Adding both the Champions League and DFB-Pokal (German Cup) to their silverware haul made it one of the greatest seasons in Bayern Munich's history.

So, while others were losing their heads at Liverpool's disappointing run in January, Thiago kept calm. All of a sudden, the Reds racked up a couple of 3-1 wins in London.

"When you are in a good dynamic you try to repeat the things you are doing, but if you are in a bad one you try to change some details for your team. Maybe the position, the speed on the ball, maybe some type of mentality.

"This is football and I have been in this situation with Barcelona, Bayern and maybe a bit here. There were small things we wanted to change for sure.

"It has happened a lot that we create the first chances in the opening 20 or 30 minutes. Against deeper teams, if you score this first goal then games get open and we have more time for







transition. If you are just at 0-0 the other team is comfortable. They say 'okay, we do nice at the back because the game is 0-0'.

"We are still here, but we don't have time for that transition because they don't come up and we can't make the counter-press and move forward again. So we are trying to be learning different situations in different positions against a deeper team."

The number of sides playing what Jürgen Klopp calls a 'low block' against the Reds has increased noticeably in recent times. Fearing the devastating speed at which Liverpool can counter-attack – such as for Mo Salah's second goal at West Ham – defending deep in numbers and rarely venturing forward has become a regular tactic. The best example being when Sam Allardyce's West Brom played without a striker in the first half at Anfield in December – even after going a goal down – but nicked a late point from a set-piece.

One of the reasons why the Spanish international was signed by Klopp was for his exquisite range of passing to break such opponents down. During the second half of Liverpool's 4-1 FA Cup 3rd round success at Aston Villa, Thiago put so much disguise on one pass that the ball almost arrived at the feet of Xherdan Shaqiri wearing dark glasses and a beard, Mo Salah striking it into the net seconds later.

Thiago is well aware that his manager wants him to dictate the tempo of games from midfield and pick defences open and he believes the key to breaking down defensive-minded teams lies in the quality of how the Reds use the ball.

"For sure, Liverpool's transition is so important because when you have fast players in front you have to see if you can find them and they made a lot of goals in this transition," he says. "It's first touch. It's first touch and follow the game.

"At the end, the position you have when you try to build up the game, and when you have this kind of situation, you need that possession. When the game gets a bit mad you say 'okay, let's calm down in this position,' but at the end you need the speed as well to make faster balls.

"Just to understand, the transition means that with fast players we must give a good pass in the right moment and with a nice speed as well. You must do a sharp pass in the right moments to the right players."

Having played in Spain and Germany, it's intriguing to know how different Thiago is finding English football. Directly comparing the three, however, is something he finds difficult to do due to the way the game has changed.

"Football evolves and I was in Spain more than 10 years ago. At that time you think about football differently because you're younger, you're playing with – and having respect for – the players who are in front of you.

"At that time it was for me to learn my position, to try to be physically better and to improve my skills. Not just for me, but for the team. You learn that.

"Watching football now, I think it is more tactical and technical there. At Bayern Munich the counters were even faster 

DURING THE SECOND HALF AT ASTON VILLA, THIAGO PUT SO MUCH DISGUISE ON ONE PASS THAT THE BALL ALMOST ARRIVED AT THE FEET OF XHERDAN SHAQIRI WEARING DARK GLASSES AND A BEARD



FABI IS AN AMAZING PLAYER – AN AMAZING CENTRE-BACK AND HE IS EVEN BETTER AS A NUMBER SIX. I THINK WITH HIM PLAYING YOU CAN MOVE FORWARD AS A NUMBER EIGHT OR A NUMBER 10 TO MAKE THE TEAM PLAY A BIT MORE

than here. Here, you have the longer balls and different rhythm – in some parts of the game it is the same, but at the same time it gives you pleasure to play here.

"Football is always changing. You take the time of Pele, he can say to you 'I can play easily in your time because the pitch is different, everything is different'. People are better now physically, more tactically aware – football is evolving every day, every year and all the teams are trying to reach what the winning teams from the last season won.

"In this case, they try to reach Liverpool. In Germany they try to chase Bayern Munich, in Spain they try to chase Real Madrid and Barcelona, so when you win something your biggest challenge is to try to keep that level and try to win again."

There has been much discussion about how Liverpool's season would be going if key players hadn't got injured or a full Anfield had been there to cheer the Redmen on.

The general consensus is that the injuries to Virgil van Dijk, Joe Gomez and Diogo Jota (plus Thiago himself) seriously hampered Liverpool during the first half of 2020/21, while the loss of the 12th man in the stands has also had a negative impact. Thiago agrees, but won't hide behind it.

"For me, they are for sure special players, but it's not an excuse for us to say 'we are not winning because of this' or 'we are not winning because of the crowd'. They help us massively and we need them – football needs the crowd, it needs the fans – but at the end it is not an excuse. We want to win and it is this hunger that motivates us.

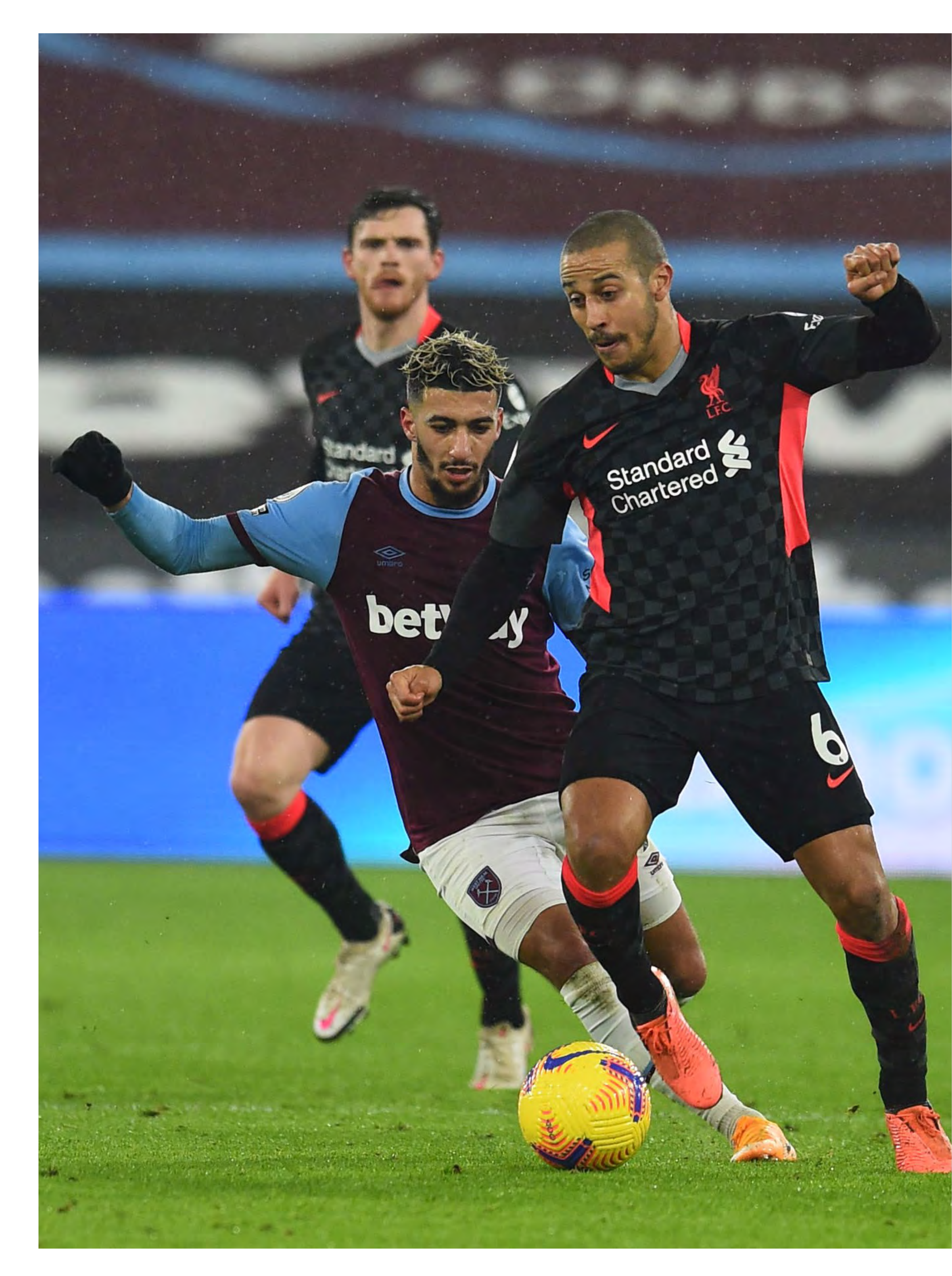
"As I say, it is no excuse if any player is not here because at the end, other teams are getting injuries as well as us."

Related to the same subject is the debate about Thiago's best position. The necessity for Fabinho – and recently Jordan Henderson – to play at centre-back means that the 29-year-old has played several games as a number six, the deepest of Liverpool's three midfielders.

Fabinho had previously made that role his own so the theory goes that when Liverpool's central defensive injury crisis is resolved, the Brazilian will return to that position and Thiago will play further forward as a number eight, or even at 10. It seemed to work well at Spurs and West Ham when he was more advanced with Gini Wijnaldum playing at six, so how does he see it?

"Fabi is an amazing player – an amazing centre-back and he is even better as a number six. I think with him playing you can move forward as a number eight or a number 10 to make the


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team play a bit more. But we have the luck that we can have him in different positions.

"I think with the years, we want to get as much versatility as we can. All the players love to score goals, we love to be close to the penalty area, but at the same time I always say that I want to play where the team needs me.

"For sure, here we have different demands of the team that, as a number six or a number eight, I try and follow. I started like a number eight or 10, but I have played as a number six so it doesn't matter. It's more or less the same style of play – this intensity, this freedom in some points. You adapt as you can."

True, adapting is a necessity in a season like this unusual 2020/21 campaign, but in which role does he prefer playing?

"I don't know! As I say, it depends on really the position of 10, eight and six. They are my favourites, but it depends on the game and the demand of the game. I prefer to play in one situation than another.

"Sometimes I say 'let me play as a number six,' and sometimes I will enjoy to be closer to the box to score a goal and make more assists. It depends a lot on what are your goals for the game, but for me our number 10 is Bobby Firmino.

"He is doing the job of number nine and number 10. For the last years he has been doing the same because he has lots of great passing characteristics and skills.

"He's having to arrive in the area, but at the same time he's having to come back and play and turn. He's like the old number 10, but he's our striker at the same point."

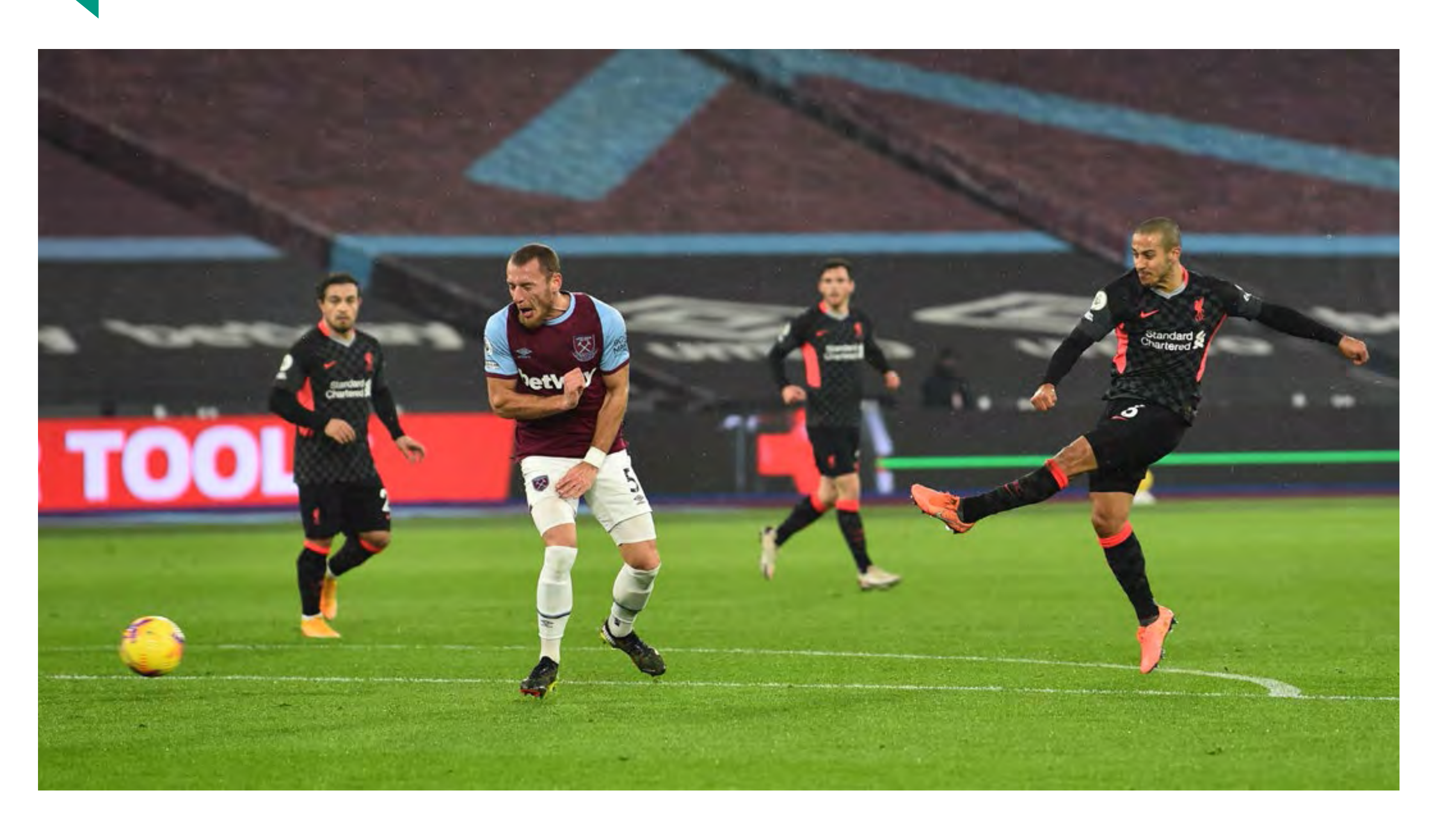
As for Thiago himself then it shouldn't be forgotten that in the middle of a global pandemic he has moved jobs, homes and countries with a young family, has recovered from coronavirus and a serious knee injury, has yet to play in front of a crowd at Anfield and, due to lockdown, hasn't experienced anything like a normal way of life in England. So there's really only one way to end this interview – where it started. How are we?

"I've settled in great. At the end, we made the move because of football, for sure, and we are enjoying the football and the passion of the people here. Not just Liverpool, but football in general.

"Unfortunately we couldn't get used to more things because of the lockdown and the covid situation, but we are very happy to be here. Before the covid situation I tried to walk around the city. I went to the docks and Anfield, the surroundings of the stadium. There was an amazing atmosphere there, so what I feel before a game will be awesome.

"I wanted to be experiencing a different league and trying to grow up as a football player. For sure, the Premier League was a dream that I had years ago – since I was a kid – and now I'm here at Liverpool and I'm enjoying it a lot."

I WANTED TO BE EXPERIENCING A DIFFERENT LEAGUE AND TRYING TO GROW UP AS A FOOTBALL PLAYER. FOR SURE, THE PREMIER LEAGUE WAS A DREAM THAT I HAD YEARS AGO – SINCE I WAS A KID – AND NOW I'M HERE AT LIVERPOOL AND I'M ENJOYING IT A LOT




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A pat on the back for Nat

"I thought Nat Phillips was outstanding at centre-half today." Jordan Henderson's assessment of his central defensive partner after the 3-1 win at West Ham was spot on and Jürgen Klopp agreed. "Outstanding game, everybody saw it," he said. "Super professional, super calm, incredibly strong in the air, good challenges, good football!"



Bursting bubbles

Mo is forever bursting bubbles when it comes to playing West Ham. His exceptional double at the London Stadium last month took his tally to nine goals in eight appearances against the Hammers, while he is now the first Liverpool player since Ian Rush to have scored 20+ goals for the Redmen in four consecutive seasons. His sublime second against West Ham was also his 100th goal for LFC from open play. What a way to reach the century.


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SALAH SAYS

It is a sign of the star quality enjoyed by **MOHAMED SALAH** that Sky Sports received more than 10,000 questions when they asked users of their social media channels to send in questions for the Egyptian King. Here are some of the best

WHO IS YOUR BEST FRIEND IN THE LIVERPOOL SQUAD NOW THAT DEJAN LOVREN HAS GONE?

At the moment Kostas [Tsimikas]. I am close to Kostas and also Shaq and Gini. Dejan and I were very close and when he left I think we were crying outside! When I knew that he was leaving, we shared a really emotional moment. I was happy for him because I knew he wanted to go and play regular football, but also I was sad because he is a good friend of mine. I am still in touch with him now. We talk from time to time and we keep texting each other every couple of days, so we stay in touch.

WHY DID YOU DO THE YOGA CELEBRATION?

Because I love doing yoga! To be fair is something that just came naturally. I think I started it after a game against Chelsea [below, in April 2019]. I was doing yoga one or two days before that game and it just came to me. I didn't really think about it – I just scored and celebrated it that way. It was a nice one. I think yoga helps my football and it also helps with your awareness and your focus. You can't really have music on while doing yoga because you have to have no distractions. It just keeps you aware and focused more and of course there is a lot of benefit to the muscles because it's going deep to stretch the muscles and help you to recover. There are still a couple of moves I cannot do because you have to be really professional at yoga to do them, but I'm trying my best!

WHO IS THE BEST CROSSER THE OTHER BALL – TRENT OR ROBBO?

That's a tough one! With Trent sometimes you're almost scared to touch his crosses because he whips it in with such pace, but that also means that sometimes you just need to touch it to score. Robbo's more calm and he tries to play it in front of the player, but I cannot choose one really. They are both different techniques and style of crosses. I can't choose one – don't get me in trouble!

WHO IS QUICKER? YOU OR SADIO MANE?

Well I would always choose myself and I am sure Sadio would pick himself! Gini always says to Sadio, 'Oh Mo is faster than you,' and Sadio says, 'No I'm faster than him'. But I think over a short distance it could be me, and over a longer distance it could be...me as well!



WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT LIVING IN LIVERPOOL?

The people. I think from my first day here they were really nice with me and always showing me the love during the game and after the game when I've been in the city. It's the people of Liverpool who make life even better for me here.

CAN YOU SPEAK IN A SCOUSE ACCENT YET?

I'm glad that I have started to understand Trent, which is the most important thing. To speak it is the next level, but to understand it is the most important thing! I think I can now





I THINK FROM MY FIRST DAY HERE THE PEOPLE WERE REALLY NICE WITH ME AND ALWAYS SHOWING ME THE LOVE DURING THE GAME AND AFTER THE GAME WHEN I'VE BEEN IN THE CITY. IT'S THE PEOPLE OF LIVERPOOL WHO MAKE LIFE EVEN BETTER FOR ME HERE

understand him but, as I say, to speak Scouse is a little bit harder. When Trent and Robbo speak to each other it is very fast and quite confusing. I ask them to speak slowly so I can understand! It takes time.

WHO IS THE BEST GOALKEEPER YOU'VE EVER PLAYED AGAINST?

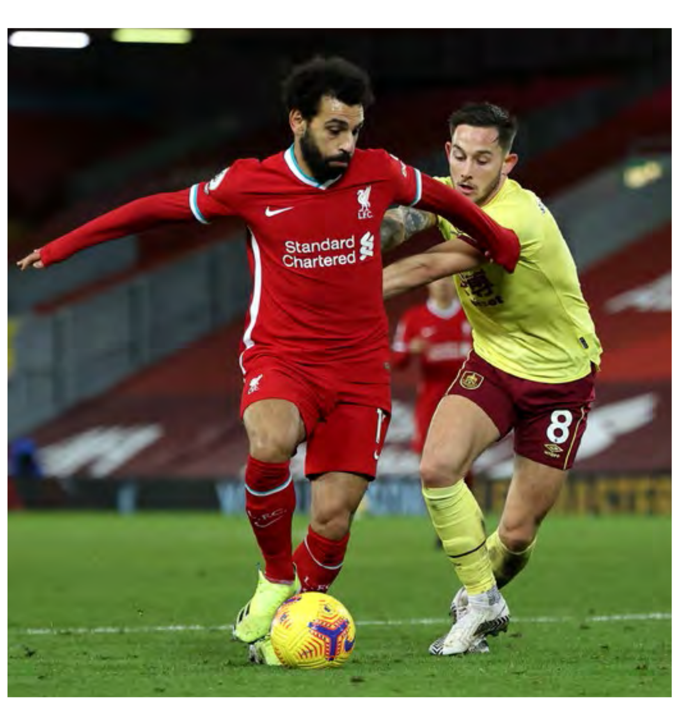
I'll tell you a few and you can choose one! Iker Casillas, Gianluigi Buffon, Alisson and Manuel Neuer. I am sure there are some other great keepers, but I am forgetting about them at the moment so you can choose whichever one of those you want to. With Casillas, he had an amazing career. I played against him when he was in Porto, so not in Madrid. I played against Madrid when I was with Roma, but I don't think he was playing in that game. You could see him talking from the back to the players and you could see that he is a character. I think also when I played against Buffon in Italy he was unbelievable too. He was an unbelievable keeper and the career he had winning everything in football is incredible. I think players in Italy have a bigger presence than in England. What I mean by that is when I was playing at Roma, [Francesco] Totti got to the stadium and the fans clapped their hands in every game, home or away. It was the same with Buffon and [Alessandro] Del Piero. Somehow in England it is different in that respect.

HOW IS IT PLAYING UNDER JÜRGEN KLOPP? IS HE A DEMANDING MANAGER?

He has changed this team. Most of us were signed by him and the team has started to win trophies. We always fight for all competitions, so I don't know what to say exactly because everybody knows that he is one of the best coaches in the world and one of the coaches of the year.



I LOVE THE NBA AND I SOMETIMES WATCH BOXING AND UFC. I ALSO WATCH TENNIS OCCASIONALLY, BUT I THINK THE FIRST ONE I CAN SAY AFTER FOOTBALL IS NBA





IS THE AFRO EVER COMING BACK?
It's okay now. Maybe in the future you will see it bigger and bigger, but then when you look down you can't see anyone! I'll leave it as it is though as I don't want my wife to cut it!

DO YOU WATCH ANY OTHER SPORTS APART FROM FOOTBALL?
Yes. I love the NBA and I sometimes watch boxing and UFC. I also watch tennis occasionally, but I think the first one I can say after football is NBA. Am I any good at basketball? On the PlayStation yes, but in real life not really! I have tried but I don't have the best technique.

WHICH ACTOR WOULD PLAY YOU IN A FILM ABOUT YOUR LIFE?
I really don't know, but I think it would be an interesting film or documentary – from where I came from and doing things for the first time and the things I have seen in my career. I think it would be interesting, but I have never thought about this question in my life! I'm still too interested in playing football and just enjoying the moment. Maybe Rami Malek. I have met him and he speaks a little bit of Arabic too and he knows the culture. And he would know maybe how to make the film better. Or Leonardo DiCaprio. That would be nice!

HOW MANY CATS DO YOU HAVE AND WHAT ARE THEY CALLED?
I have two cats – Boss and Scrap.

DO YOU PREFER EGYPTIAN FOOD OR ENGLISH FOOD?
Well I prefer healthy food to be fair. I eat both. There is some healthy food here and some healthy food in Egypt. I eat everything and I don't really have my favourite of the two. My favourite overall would be Italian because I think Italian tastes unbelievable. I have eaten fish and chips a couple of times, but I am not a big fan! I eat normal fish but not fried fish. Koshari is my favourite, 100 per cent. [Koshari is a traditional Egyptian dish mixing chick peas, pasta, fried onions, and zesty tomato sauce, served on top a bed of rice and brown lentils]. There is nothing close to Koshari. I prefer it more than anything in the world.




11
L.F.C.
AXA



KEEGAN AT SEVENTY

He was Anfield's first superstar of the 1970s, making the Liverpool number 7 shirt famous. On Sunday 14 February, KEVIN KEEGAN turns 70. Happy birthday Mighty Mouse...

Kevin Keegan was playing for Fourth Division Scunthorpe United when Bill Shankly signed him for £33,000 in 1971. Can you imagine the social media fume if the Reds signed a fourth tier player now? It proved to be brilliant business for LFC

After running out to make his Liverpool debut at home to Nottingham Forest, Keegan scored his first Reds goal in just 12 minutes during a 3-1 win

Kevin's first away goal came in August 1971 at Newcastle United's St James' Park, which looked a bit different by the time he managed them in the 1990s!





He didn't score, but Liverpool won Keegan's first Merseyside derby 4-0 at Anfield and at the end of 1971/72 he was named as the Reds' Young Player of the Year









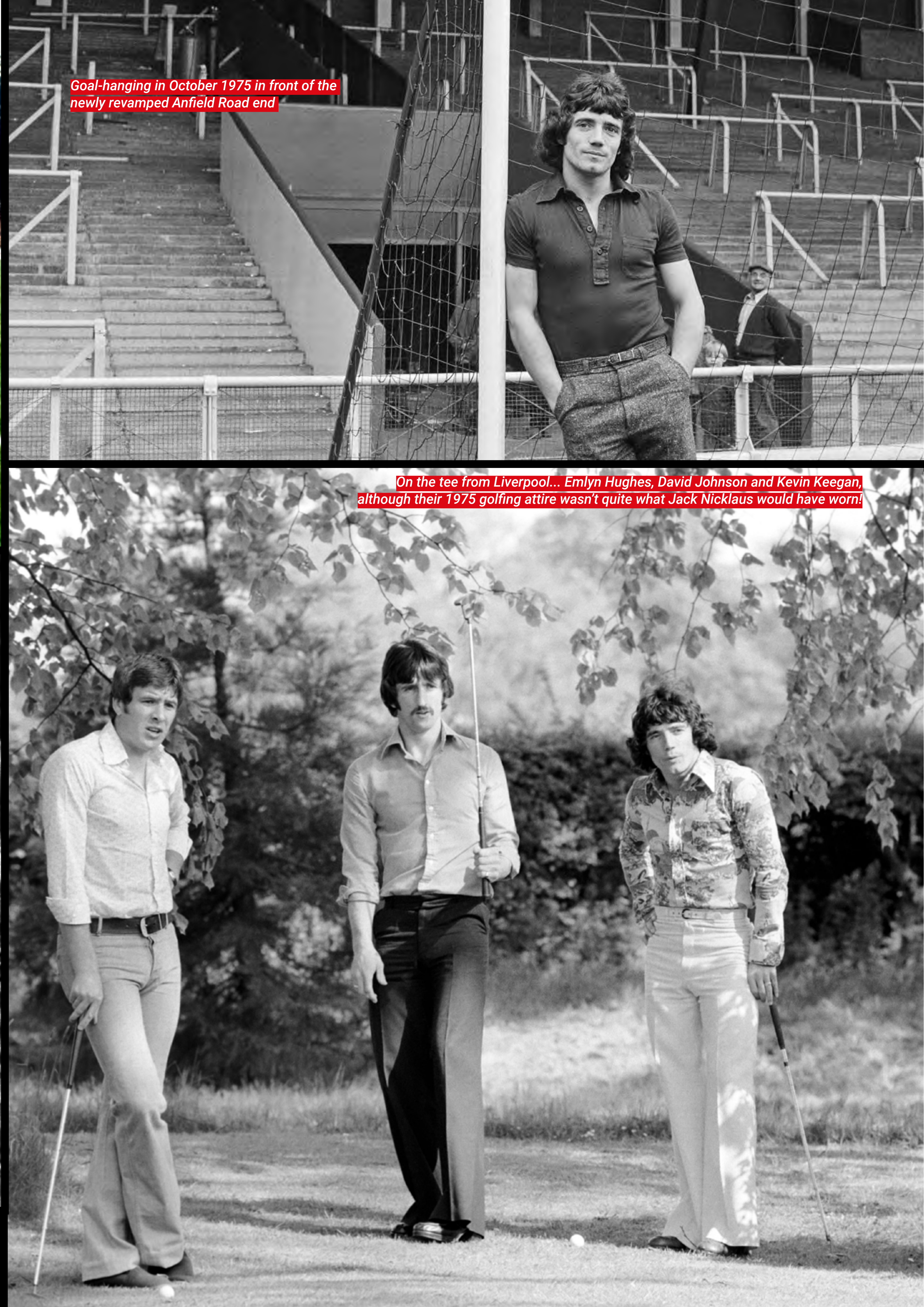
Eating by candlelight with Stevie Heighway during the 1973 'three day week' to conserve electricity



'And Newcastle were undressed' - scoring his second in the 1974 FA Cup final win against Newcastle at Wembley

Nicknamed 'Mighty Mouse' after the superhero cartoon mouse, Keegan didn't lack punch as Billy Bremner discovered in the 1974 Charity Shield!

Away from the pitch, Kevin lived a quiet life with wife Jean in the small village of Hendre, North Wales



Goal-hanging in October 1975 in front of the newly revamped Anfield Road end

On the tee from Liverpool... Emlyn Hughes, David Johnson and Kevin Keegan, although their 1975 golfing attire wasn't quite what Jack Nicklaus would have worn!

Mighty Mouse visits Mickey Mouse - Kevin Keegan at Disneyland in 1976









From 1973 to 1985, the BBC ran a TV programme called 'Superstars' in which elite athletes from various sports competed against each other. It seems incredible now, but in 1976 Kevin Keegan took part in what was one of the show's most memorable episodes. During the cycling contest at Bracknell Leisure Centre, Keegan fell off his bike and suffered a heavy fall, leaving him with abrasions and cuts on his back, shoulder and arm. It looked like he would pull out, but he told the cameras "these people here in the stands have come to see me make a fool of myself, and they've got a right to it!" before picking himself up and winning the steeplechase. Quite what Liverpool manager Bob Paisley thought of it is anyone's guess, but then Keegan wasn't just a superstar but a superhero. He and John Toshack had such a good strike partnership that they were football's Batman and Robin. Kapow!



1976/77 was Keegan's last season as a Red before moving to Hamburg. A week after running out here at Loftus Road he clinched his third league championship with Liverpool before helping the Redmen to win a glorious first European Cup in Rome

Lifting the European Cup back in Liverpool. If you're wondering why he had sunglasses on then eyes right... Borussia Moenchengladbach left their mark on Kev!





Anfield returns - for Southampton in 1980 and Newcastle in 1984

Keegan's best mate Terry McDermott launched his autobiography in 2017 and when he did a book signing in the LFC Club Store at Liverpool One, Kevin came along to support him. Legend. Happy 70th birthday Kev.





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L.F.C.

Questions & Answers with

TRENT
ALEXANDER-ARNOLD

What music does he listen to? Does he plan to change his shirt number or want to play in central midfield? Will Robbo get more assists than him? And why are the bins in Liverpool purple? The Reds' right-back has all the answers in this quick-fire round of questions...



DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR LIVERPOOL DEBUT AGAINST SPURS IN 2016?

I remember my Liverpool debut like it was yesterday. It was an unbelievable moment for me. I've had some special moments on the pitch – and I'm lucky enough to have been on the pitch for a lot of amazing moments with this club – but that is definitely the proudest one for me. Obviously winning a couple of trophies along the way and playing in some big games is special, but that is the proudest moment I've had.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE A LOCAL LAD PLAYING FOR LIVERPOOL?

It's a proud moment every time I'm able to put on a red shirt and be part of Liverpool. It's something that is really special to me and to be one of a few local lads to do it is also special as it shows the club is doing something right and the Academy is producing local players. Hopefully we'll have more coming through.



DO YOU WANT TO PLAY IN CENTRAL MIDFIELD IN THE FUTURE?

Playing in central midfield is not something I've thought about too much. I'm happy playing at right-back. I think I'm doing quite well in that position and it's somewhere I enjoy playing, but at the end of the day it's not my decision. I'd be happy to play anywhere on the pitch for Liverpool.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A ONE-CLUB MAN?
I always dreamed of only playing for Liverpool when I was growing up. A lot of my idols were one-club men and it's something I'd like to be too.

HOW DO YOU STAY MOTIVATED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?
The players around me, and the manager and the staff, are always pushing us. Whatever you do is never good enough because it is never perfect, and we are always striving for perfection even though it doesn't really exist. There is always a level above that you can reach. We've seen players in the past – and we have two players now – who have come as close to perfection as many people have ever seen. They are the levels that can be hit and they are the levels that we need to aim for.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE LIVERPOOL'S STYLE OF PLAY?
I'd describe our style of play as exciting, fun and good to be a part of. It's a style that suits me and I think I can be at the best of my ability in a system like this rather than a more defensive one. It enables me to get forward as often as possible and I think a lot of the players would agree with that. For spectators, viewers and fans, I think we play a good style to watch. We're a team that knows what it takes to win and that wants to win every game. We're relentless in that sense and there is always room for improvement. We're always searching to get better.

DID YOU GET ROBBO'S BOOK FOR CHRISTMAS?
I'd already read it before Christmas, when it first came out, and I'd encourage anyone to read it because it's a really good read. Even though I was part of all the experiences, it was good to read about how other people saw it and how Robbo felt. It took me back to the amazing memories that we had.

DO YOU READ OR PLAY VIDEO GAMES MORE IN YOUR SPARE TIME?
It's good to have a balance. I probably play more video games than read, but I still read fairly often. I play a little bit of chess too. I watched *The Queen's Gambit* on Netflix, which was a really good watch and probably got me back into it a little bit more, so chess is something I like to play sometimes.

"I ALWAYS DREAMED OF ONLY PLAYING FOR LIVERPOOL WHEN I WAS GROWING UP. A LOT OF MY IDOLS WERE ONE-CLUB MEN AND IT'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO BE TOO"





"NUMBER 66 HAS BEEN GOOD TO ME EVER SINCE I STARTED SO THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO CHANGE IT"

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUNG PEOPLE PLAYING FOOTBALL?

The advice I would give to young people would be just to enjoy it. Work hard, but the main thing is definitely to enjoy it. Don't feel pressured or forced to play football, especially at a young age. I think it's all about enjoying it and learning at the same time.

IF YOU COULD SPEND FIVE MINUTES WITH ANYONE PAST OR PRESENT WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Michael Jordan. Just for his mentality more than anything. I believe that's the key to everything – mentality – so I'd say him, or Kobe Bryant.

WHO IS THE FASTEST PLAYER AT LIVERPOOL?

There are a few contenders. I'd say it's between Mo Salah, Sadio Mane, Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez. It's very tough to say, but I'd probably give it to Virgil.

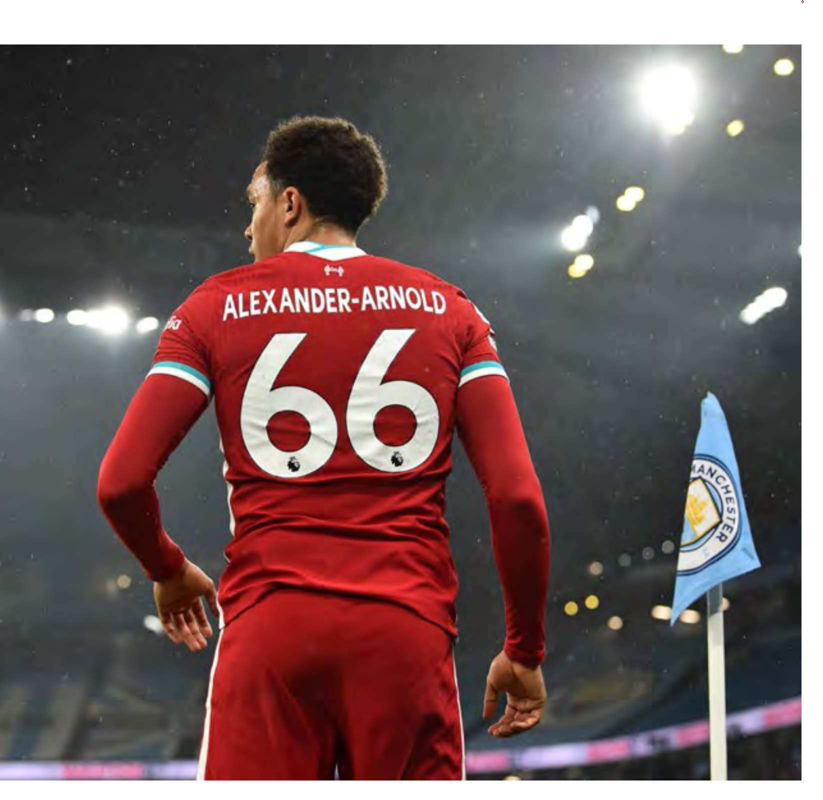
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF SADIO MANE?

First and foremost, Sadio is an unbelievable player, but to be so humble, so giving and so generous to the community off the pitch is unbelievable. He's an amazing role model to so many and I think he is someone who should be really proud of himself for never forgetting his roots. It's an amazing story to be here



from where he came from and how he has been able to make it to the top is just a testament to his hard work and desire that we see every day. He has never given up on his dream and I think any young person who has a dream of becoming a footballer – or following their dream in whatever venture they want to – should see him as an amazing example to follow.

WHO WOULD WIN A HEAD-TO-HEAD PENALTY SHOOT-OUT BETWEEN JAMES MILNER AND MO SALAH?
Both are really good at penalties, but I'd say Milner.





HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CHEMISTRY PLAYING ON THE RIGHT WITH MO SALAH?
We have good chemistry. Mo is an amazing guy off the pitch and he deserves everything he achieves because he is one of the hardest workers I have ever seen. He has unbelievable dedication to the game, on and off the pitch, and works harder than most people at wanting to get better so he deserves what he gets. At first, I think everyone was kind of surprised at how well he did, but I don't think he was because he knew he had it in him, but had a lot to prove. Once we'd all seen how hard he works it was no surprise to us because, at the end of the day, you get out what you put in. Mo puts a lot in, so he gets a lot out and is an amazing player.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF CHANGING SHIRT NUMBERS?
Not really. If it's not broke, don't fix it. Number 66 has been good to me ever since I started so there's no reason for me to change it. Maybe in the future it will change, but I haven't really thought about it. It's something that I enjoy wearing.

WHICH TEAM-MATE WOULD YOU TAKE TO A DESERT ISLAND IF YOU WERE GOING TO BE STRANDED ON ONE?
That's a tough one. I'd probably say James Milner because he's the most practical one, the one that would probably think the best under pressure. He can handle pressure, like when he's taking penalties, so I'd have to take Milner.

WHY ARE THE BINS IN LIVERPOOL PURPLE?
They're a mixture of red and blue for Liverpool and Everton.

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO IN TERMS OF MUSIC?
Obviously I like listening to new music, but I'm mainly into 2000s tunes. I didn't grow up listening to tunes from then directly, but it's good to go back and listen to the music from when you were born. I like Eminem, 50 Cent, a bit of Neo, Chris Brown and old-school Kanye West. That's what I listen to when I'm on my way in to play footie although I mainly throw it on shuffle so when something I've not heard for ages come on I get a nice surprise. Like when Future comes on, it takes me back to school.

WHO HAS THE HARDEST SHOT IN THE TEAM?
I'd probably say Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain...[thinks about it more]...Yeh, I'll go for Ox.

IF YOU COULD PLAY IN THE LAST FIVE MINUTES OF ANY GAME IN HISTORY, WHICH GAME WOULD IT BE?
The last five minutes of Istanbul and then the pens. It's probably the best Champions League final ever, really.

WHO'S GOT THE BEST GIF GAME ON THE GROUP CHAT?
The best GIF game has got to be Virg. He's funny – massively, massively funny – and is straight on it. He's fast at it as well. He knows what he's searching for and he's on it all the time.

WILL ROBBO GET MORE ASSISTS THAN YOU THIS SEASON?
Er....no! And I hope to beat my own assists record again this season, that's the aim.

Championing the NHS

He's already a Premier League and European Champion and now Jordan Henderson is the first official NHS Charities Together Champion. The Liverpool skipper is acting as an ambassador for the fundraising organisation. "As the charity's official champion I'll do what I can to shine a light on the amazing work NHS charities do to support the NHS. It's a massive honour for me."





50-50 CHALLENGE

50 questions on Liverpool FC. One right answer, one wrong answer for each. Will you come out of our 50-50 challenge on the ball? Or will you be left shuddering...thinking you shudder picked the other answer? Get stuck into ‘em Reds...





1. HOW OLD IS JÜRGEN KLOPP?
a) 52
b) 53

2. WHO WEARS THE NO.76 SHIRT?
a) Neco Williams
b) Rhys Williams

3. WHO HAS SCORED MORE GOALS FOR LIVERPOOL AGAINST EVERTON?
a) Sadio Mane
b) Mo Salah

4. WHO IS OLDER?
a) Nat Phillips
b) Joe Gomez

5. WHO HAS WON MORE INTERNATIONAL CAPS?
a) Divock Origi
b) Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain

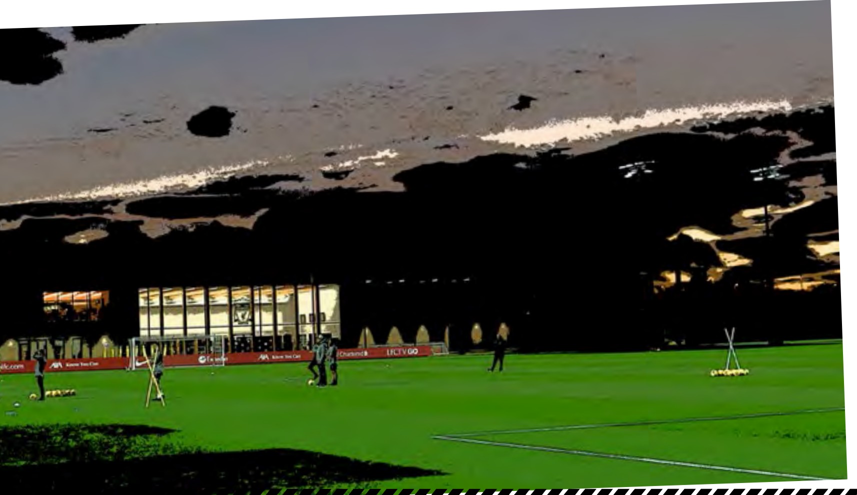
6. HOW MANY TIMES DOES THE WORD 'WALK' FEATURE IN THE FULL SONG OF YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE?
a) 11
b) 12

7. WHICH PART OF LIVERPOOL IS CURTIS JONES FROM?
a) Croxteth
b) Toxteth

8. WHAT COLOUR ARE THE NETS AT ANFIELD?
a) Red
b) White

9. WHO HAS KEPT MORE CLEAN SHEETS FOR LIVERPOOL (AS OF THE END OF JAN 2021)?
a) Adrian
b) Caoimhin Kelleher

10. WHO GOT HIS FIRST GOAL FOR LIVERPOOL IN THE 7-2 LEAGUE CUP WIN AT LINCOLN CITY?
a) Marko Grujic
b) Takumi Minamino



11. IN WHICH PORTUGUESE CITY WAS DIOGO JOTA BORN?
a) Lisbon
b) Porto

12. WHO WERE LIVERPOOL'S OPPONENTS WHEN 2,000 FANS WERE LET INSIDE ANFIELD FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS SEASON?
a) Leicester City
b) Wolverhampton Wanderers

13. WHO HAS MADE MORE APPEARANCES IN THE LEAGUE CUP FOR THE REDS?
a) Andy Robertson
b) Trent Alexander-Arnold

14. HOW OLD IS KOSTAS TSIMIKAS?
a) 23
b) 24

15. WHO HAS SCORED MORE GOALS FOR LIVERPOOL (AS OF THE END OF JAN 2021)?
a) Jordan Henderson
b) James Milner

16. HOW MANY SCOREBOARDS ARE THERE AT ANFIELD?
a) One
b) Two

17. LORIS KARIUS IS ON LOAN AT WHICH CLUB?
a) Hertha Berlin
b) Union Berlin



18. WHO IS YOUNGER?
a) Fabinho
b) Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain

19. WHAT NATIONALITY IS PEP LIJNDERS?
a) Belgian
b) Dutch

20. WHO MADE HIS LIVERPOOL DEBUT AWAY TO FC MIDTJYLLAND IN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE?
a) Billy Koumetio
b) Leighton Clarkson

21. HOW MANY TIMES IS THE WORD 'BALL' SUNG IN THE BOBBY FIRMINO 'SI SENOR' CHANT?
a) Two
b) Three



22. WHICH CLUB PARTNER SPONSORS LIVERPOOL'S NEW TRAINING CENTRE IN KIRKBY?
a) Expedia
b) AXA

23. WHAT SHIRT NUMBER DOES DIOGO JOTA WEAR?
a) 20
b) 21



24. THIAGO ALCANTARA'S DAD PLAYED FOR BRAZIL. WHAT IS HIS NAME?
a) Mazinho
b) Marcio

25. WHAT IS LFC PRINCIPAL OWNER JOHN W HENRY'S MIDDLE NAME?
a) Walter
b) William

26. AT WHICH GROUND DID ALISSON SAVE A PENALTY THIS SEASON?
a) The Etihad
b) Stamford Bridge

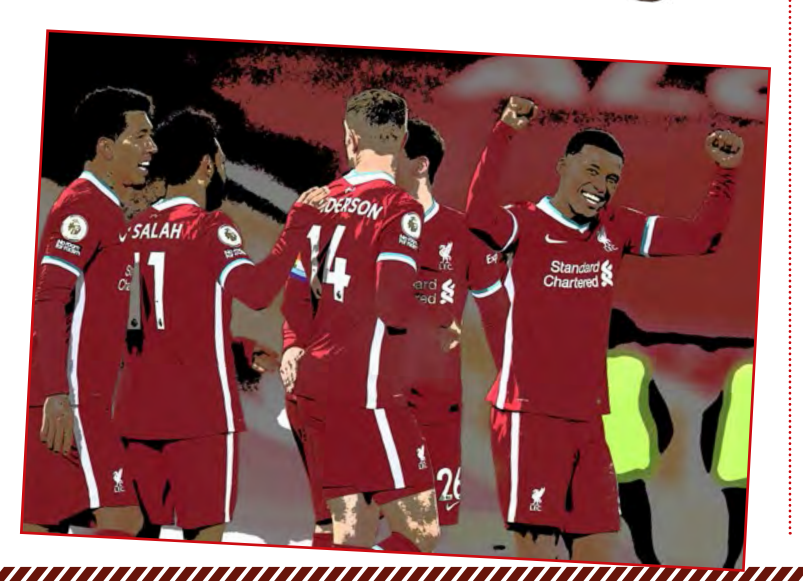
27. WHO HAS SCORED MORE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GOALS FOR LIVERPOOL?
a) Divock Origi
b) Virgil van Dijk

28. WHO IS BOB PAISLEY CARRYING ON THE STATUE OF HIM AT ANFIELD?
a) Emlyn Hughes
b) Tommy Smith

29. WHO HAS SCORED MORE HAT-TRICKS AT ANFIELD?
a) Sadio Mane
b) Roberto Firmino



30. WHERE WAS GINI WIJNALDUM BORN?
a) Rotterdam
b) Amsterdam



31. WHO HAS SCORED MORE PENALTIES FOR LIVERPOOL (AS OF THE END OF JAN 2021)?
a) James Milner
b) Mo Salah

32. WHO IS OLDER?
a) Peter Krawietz
b) John Achterberg

33. NABY KEITA SCORED AGAINST WHICH TEAM AT THE FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP?
a) CF Monterrey
b) CR Flamengo

34. IN WHAT YEAR DID STANDARD CHARTERED BECOME LFC'S SHIRT SPONSOR?
a) 2010
b) 2012

35. JOEL MATIP SCORED HIS FIRST GOAL FOR THE REDS IN WHICH CITY?
a) Liverpool
b) London

36. 'CORNER TAKEN QUICKLY ORIGI!' WHO TOOK THE CORNER?
a) Xherdan Shaqiri
b) Trent Alexander-Arnold

37. LIVERPOOL WON THE PREMIER LEAGUE WITH HOW MANY POINTS LAST SEASON?
a) 96
b) 99



38. HOW MANY GOALS HAS VIRGIL VAN DIJK SCORED FOR LIVERPOOL?
a) 13
b) 16

39. HARRY WILSON IS OUT ON LOAN AT WHICH CLUB?
a) Swansea City
b) Cardiff City

40. HOW MANY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES HAS JORDAN HENDERSON LIFTED TROPHIES IN AS LIVERPOOL CAPTAIN?
a) 3
b) 4



41. WHO HAS SCORED MORE GOALS AGAINST MANCHESTER CITY?
a) Roberto Firmino
b) Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain

42. WHICH LFC LEGEND HAS MORE FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER?
a) Ian Rush
b) John Barnes

43. WHO IS THE MANAGER OF LIVERPOOL U18S?
a) Barry Lewtas
b) Marc Bridge-Wilkinson

44. WHO SCORED LIVERPOOL'S FIRST GOAL OF THE SEASON?
a) Takumi Minamino
b) Joel Matip

45. WHAT SHIRT NUMBER DOES XHERDAN SHAQIRI WEAR?
a) 23
b) 33

46) WHAT IS MICHAEL EDWARDS' JOB TITLE AT LIVERPOOL?
a) Head of Transfers
b) Sporting Director

47. WHO HAS SCORED MORE GOALS FOR LIVERPOOL WHEN COMING ON AS A SUBSTITUTE (AS OF THE END OF JAN 2021)?
a) Mo Salah
b) Sadio Mane

48. IN WHICH YEAR DID ANFIELD'S NEW MAIN STAND OPEN?
a) 2015
b) 2016

49. WHERE WAS THIAGO BORN?
a) Brazil
b) Italy

50. JÜRGEN KLOPP HAS MANAGED LIVERPOOL IN 56 GAMES IN EUROPEAN COMPETITION. HOW MANY HAVE THE REDS WON?
a) 32
b) 42



ANSWERS: *1. b) 53, 2. a) Neco Williams, 3. a) Sadio Mane (4v2), 4. a) Nat Phillips (by two months), 5. b) Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (35v29), 6. a) 11. 7. b) Toxteth, 8. b) White, 9. a) Adrian (5v4), 10. a) Marko Grujic, 11. b) Porto. 12. b) Wolverhampton Wanderers, 13. b) Trent Alexander-Arnold (3v1), 14. b) 24, 15. a) Jordan Henderson (30v26), 16. b) Two, 17. b) Union Berlin, 18. a) Fabinho (by two months), 19. b) Dutch, 20. a) Billy Koumetio, 21. a) Two, 22. b) AXA, 23. a) 20, 24. a) Mazinho, 25. b) William, 26. b) Stamford Bridge, 27. a) Divock Origi (3v2), 28. a) Emlyn Hughes, 29. b) Roberto Firmino (1v0), 30. a) Rotterdam, 31. a) James Milner (19v15), 32. b) John Achterberg (by 5 months), 33. a) CF Monterrey, 34. a) 2010, 35. b) London (v Crystal Palace), 36. Trent Alexander-Arnold, 37. b) 99, 38. a) 13, 39. b) Cardiff City, 40. b) 4 (Spain, Turkey, Qatar & England), 41. a) Roberto Firmino (5v2), 42. John Barnes (323k v 277k), 43. b) Marc Bridge-Wilkinson. 44. a) Takumi Minamino (in the Community Shield), 45. a) 23, 46. b) Sporting Director, 47. a) Mo Salah (5v2), 48. b) 2016, 49. b) Italy, 50. a) 32.*

WIN A SIGNED COPY OF ROBBO'S BOOK



Not only can you read Andy Robertson's brilliant book about Liverpool's Premier League winning season, you can now hear the Reds' left-back tell his story too

Robbo - Now You're Gonna Believe Us - is available to download as an audiobook on Amazon Audible. Even better, Robbo has narrated some of it himself.

Hearing Robbo's dulcet Glaswegian tones is a treat for any Kopite and while he wasn't able to narrate it all - what with having to try to win the Premier League and Champions League again - his insightful and often funny tale is told over eight hours and 13 minutes.

Anyone for a binge-listen?

To celebrate the release of his audiobook, and give us the chance to promote it for him, Robbo has given us a signed copy of his hardback book - due to be released as a paperback in March - to give away to one lucky Liverpool FC Magazine reader.

So, while you're downloading his audiobook - and new users of Amazon Audible can sign up to listen free for 30 days - why not drop us an email to enter our competition too.

audible amazon.co.uk

To be in with a chance of winning, simply tell us:

Robbo scored his first LFC goal of the 2020/21 season against which club?

Email your answer, name, address and contact number with 'Signed Robbo Book Competition' in the subject-line to liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com before 1 March 2021. Normal Reach PLC competition rules apply.

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LIVERPOOL
NEVER WALK ALONE



The REDS in Deutschland

Liverpool's first visit to Leipzig in the Champions League last 16 will be our 22nd competitive match in Germany, making it the country the Redmen have played in the most outside of the UK. From UEFA Cup final wins in 1973 and 2001 and famous nights in Munich to some best forgotten, plenty has happened...

Words: Chris McLoughlin



European Cup 10.02.1965

Cologne 0-0 Liverpool

German Chancellor Dr Ludwig Erhard and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool attended the Reds' first ever competitive game in Germany, but this European Cup encounter wasn't a classic. Ian St John and Ron Yeats checked out reading material for the flight over, but thawing snow made the pitch inside Cologne's Müngersdorfer Stadion slippery and although the West German champions were the better side, a string of saves by Tommy Lawrence kept the scoreline goalless. After a 0-0 draw at Anfield in the second leg, the Bill Shankly boys eventually went through on the toss of a coin when a replay in Rotterdam finished 2-2.

European Fairs Cup 14.11.1967

TSV 1860 Munich 2-1 Liverpool

Having beaten TSV 8-0 at Anfield in the first leg, there was little to play for at Grünwalder Straße but when Ian Callaghan finished off a five-man move in the fifth minute it looked like the Reds might carry on where they left off. But with an important First Division game to play at Sunderland four days later, Liverpool eased up and two goals from Wilfried Kohlars gave TSV 1860 Munich boss Albert Sing something to, er, shout about.

European Fairs Cup 24.03.1971

Bayern Munich 1-1 Liverpool

Munich's Grünwalder Straße – aka the Sechzger Stadion – was also home to Bayern Munich until 1972 and Liverpool visited twice in 1971. On the first occasion, Bill Shankly's side took a 3-0 advantage there, thanks to an Alun Evans hat-trick, in this European Fairs Cup quarter-final and Shanks deployed Ian Ross as a man-marker on sweeper Franz Beckenbauer. Not only did he keep 'Der Kaiser' quiet, Ross opened the scoring in the 74th minute although Edgar Schneider denied the Reds a first win on German soil when his shot spun through Ray Clemence's hands.

European Cup Winners' Cup 03.11.1971

Bayern Munich 3-1 Liverpool

Eight months later, Liverpool were back in Munich having drawn 0-0 at Anfield in the first leg of the European Cup Winners' Cup 2nd round. Truth be told, the 3-1 final scoreline flattered Bill Shankly's team, who were repeatedly torn apart by Bayern. Gerd Muller scored twice and struck the post in the space of nine minutes, but Alun Evans gave Liverpool a glimmer of hope when he chested the ball down and spun on a sixpence before finding the top corner. It won Evans West Germany's Goal of the Month competition, but a third FCB goal from Uli Hoeness completed a well-deserved home win.

UEFA Cup 26.09.1972

Eintracht Frankfurt 0-0 Liverpool

What proved to be Liverpool's first European trophy-winning season began with a UEFA Cup clash against Eintracht Frankfurt. Kevin Keegan and Emlyn Hughes secured a 2-0 win at Anfield and, despite the 0-0 scoreline, it proved to be a lively match at the Waldstadion which, according to Frankfurt boss Erich Ribbeck, had "the best turf in Europe." Young defender Trevor Storton did well on his Reds debut, but Ray Clemence starred. "Over and over Liverpool had to thank the brilliance of Ray Clemence," reported the Liverpool Echo. "When people talk of Liverpool's greatest signing they should not forget Clemence."



UEFA Cup 29.11.1972

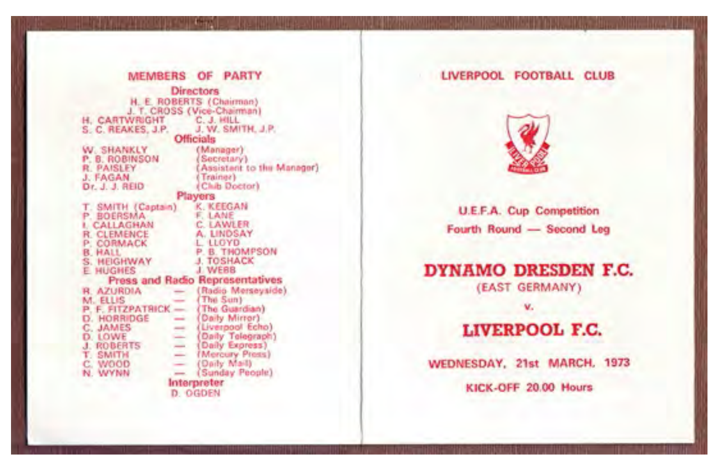
Dynamo Berlin 0-0 Liverpool

After five trips to West Germany, Liverpool found themselves on the other side of the Berlin Wall in East Germany for the first time in the third round of the UEFA Cup. Soldiers boarded the team bus to take a look around when the Reds arrived behind the Iron Curtain, but the match was a tedious 0-0 draw with the Reds failing to have a shot on target and Dynamo Berlin barely testing Ray Clemence. Kevin Keegan was forced off early with a thigh injury and Bill Shankly wasn't best pleased with the officiating after his side conceded 50 free-kicks – 18 of them for offside! Liverpool won the second leg 3-1.

UEFA Cup 21.03.1973

Dynamo Dresden 0-1 Liverpool

Liverpool's UEFA Cup quarter-final opponents were also East German Dynamos, but this time in Dresden rather than Berlin. A 2-0 Anfield victory in the first leg set the Reds up nicely and finally, at the seventh attempt, they won for the first time in Germany. Brian Hall was outstanding in midfield, but the winning goal came when Kevin Keegan sent Stevie Heighway



MEMBERS OF PARTY

Directors

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J. T. CROSS (Vice-Chairman)
H. CARTWRIGHT   C. J. HILL
S. C. REAKES, J.P.   J. W. SMITH, J.P.

Officials

W. SHANKLY (Manager)
P. B. ROBINSON (Secretary)
R. PAISLEY (Assistant to the Manager)
J. FAGAN (Trainer)
Dr. J. J. REID (Club Doctor)

Players

T. SMITH (Captain)   K. KEEGAN
P. BOERSMA   F. LANE
I. CALLAGHAN   C. LAWLER
R. CLEMENCE   A. LINDSAY
P. CORMACK   L. LLOYD
B. HALL   P. B. THOMPSON
S. HEIGHWAY   J. TOSHACK
E. HUGHES   J. WEBB

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P. F. FITZPATRICK — (The Guardian)
D. HORRIDGE — (Daily Mirror)
C. JAMES — (Liverpool Echo)
D. LOWE — (Daily Telegraph)
J. ROBERTS — (Daily Express)
T. SMITH — (Mercury Press)
C. WOOD — (Daily Mail)
N. WYNN — (Sunday People)

Interpreter

D. OGDEN

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB

U.E.F.A. Cup Competition
Fourth Round — Second Leg

DYNAMO DRESDEN F.C.
(EAST GERMANY)
v.
LIVERPOOL F.C.

WEDNESDAY, 21st MARCH, 1973
KICK-OFF 20.00 Hours



ITINERARY

Headquarters:—
Night of Monday, 19th March, 1973:
Berlin Hotel, Kurfurstenstrasse 62, West Berlin 30 (Telephone 0311/26-92-91).
Nights of Tuesday and Wednesday, 20th and 21st March, 1973:
Newa Hotel, Christianstrasse, Dresden 801 (Telephone Dresden 66-44-1).

Monday, 19th March, 1973 — Local Time
Meet at Anfield Ground ... 15.00 hrs.
Motor Coach leaves Anfield Ground ... 15.15 hrs.
Arrives Manchester Airport ... 16.30 hrs.
Plane leaves Manchester Airport (B.E.A. Charter Flight) ... 17.00 hrs.
Dinner on Flight
Arrives Tempelhof Airport (West Berlin) ... 19.00 hrs.
Motor Coach from Tempelhof Airport to the Berlin Hotel.

Tuesday, 20th March, 1973
The players will train on the ground of the Tennis Borussia F.C., West Berlin at 10.30 hours.
Motor Coach leaves Berlin Hotel ... 13.45 hrs.
(The party will transfer from West Berlin to East Berlin via the Friedrichstrasse Border Point. It will be necessary to change from one motor coach to another at this point.)
Motor Coach arrives Newa Hotel, Dresden ... (approx.) 17.15 hrs.

Wednesday, 21st March, 1973
Motor Coach leaves Newa Hotel ... 18.40 hrs.
Arrives Dynamo Dresden F.C. Stadium ... 19.00 hrs.

KICK-OFF 20.00 Hours

Motor Coach from Dynamo Dresden F.C. Stadium to Newa Hotel after game.

Thursday, 21st March, 1973
Motor Coach leaves Newa Hotel ... 9.30 hrs.
(The party will transfer from East Berlin to West Berlin via the Friedrichstrasse Border Point. It will again be necessary to change motor coaches at this point.)
Motor Coach arrives Tempelhof Airport 13.00 hrs.
Plane leaves Tempelhof Airport (B.E.A. Charter Flight) ... 13.30 hrs.
Lunch on Flight
Arrives Manchester Airport ... 15.30 hrs.
Motor Coach from Manchester Airport to Anfield Ground.

running down the wing before arriving at the front post to clinically convert his cross. Having already had two first-half goals disallowed, it was precisely what Keegan and the Redmen deserved.



UEFA Cup final 23.05.1973

Borussia Moenchengladbach 2-0 Liverpool

An historic night as despite losing the second leg of the UEFA Cup final 2-0 at Bökelberg, Bill Shankly's Liverpool clinched the club's first European trophy. A 3-0 first-leg win at Anfield had put the Reds in a commanding position, but what was described as a 'tumultuous bombardment' by Borussia Moenchengladbach in the first half saw the hosts pull two goals back through Jupp Heynckes. Shankly told his players at half-time that Gladbach were "a spent force," and he was right. They failed to score again and captain Tommy Smith lifted the UEFA Cup. "On a personal level, it was a very special feeling to be the first Liverpool captain to lift a European trophy," he said. "I saw it as the crowning achievement of my best season to date."

UEFA Cup 03.03.1976

Dynamo Dresden 0-0 Liverpool

Having again reached the UEFA Cup quarter-final, but now under the management of Bob Paisley, the Reds returned to Dresden for the first leg. Steve Heighway certainly seemed to like the in-flight menu, but the game finished 0-0 because of the brilliance of Ray Clemence. Dynamo were awarded a contentious penalty in the 51st minute but Paisley had seen their spot-kick taker, Peter Kotte, take one in a previous match. He told Clemence to dive to his right and he did, brilliantly tipping the ball away with his fingertips. Phil Thompson hit the bar late on, but it was Clemence's fine goalkeeping that set the Reds up to win the Anfield return 2-1 en-route to winning the UEFA Cup again.



European Cup 02.11.1977

Dynamo Dresden 2-1 Liverpool

Liverpool were European Champions when they made a third trip to the Rudolf Harbig Stadium in five seasons. Paisley's men began their defence of the European Cup with a 5-1 win against Dynamo Dresden at Anfield, but the East Germans were a good side. Goals from Peter Kotte and Hartmut Schade in the opening seven minutes of the second half had the Reds sweating, but yet again a string of saves from Ray Clemence kept Liverpool afloat before a lucky Steve Heighway goal – after Dresden's goalkeeper collided with a defender to leave an open net – saw off their challenge.

Super Cup final 22.11.1977

SV Hamburg 1-1 Liverpool

European Champions Liverpool met European Cup Winners' Cup winners Hamburg in 1977 UEFA Super Cup final, played over two legs. The tie had added spice as Reds legend Kevin Keegan had quit Anfield for Hamburg just months earlier, but the contest failed to capture the imagination of the German public and a sleet-swept Volkspark had a crowd of just 16,000. They saw Ferdinand Keller's opener cancelled out by David Fairclough before David Johnson missed a chance to win it, but it mattered not. Keegan, who met his replacement Kenny Dalglish in the Holiday Inn beforehand, was beaten 6-0 on his Anfield return in the second leg as LFC added a first Super Cup to the trophy collection.

European Cup 29.03.1978

Borussia Moenchengladbach 2-1 Liverpool

Beaten by Liverpool in the 1973 UEFA Cup final and 1977 European Cup final, Borussia Moenchengladbach must have despaired at drawing the Redmen again in the 1978 European Cup semi-final. Dusseldorf's Rheinstadion hosted the first leg in front of 67,000 and David Johnson's 88th minute equaliser (right) looked to have secured a draw until Rainer Bonhof's 89th minute free-kick eluded Ray Clemence. The Reds overcame the deficit, turning in one of their best ever European displays at Anfield to win the second leg 3-0 before lifting the European Cup again at Wembley courtesy of a goal from King Kenny Dalglish.

European Cup 22.04.1981

Bayern Munich 1-1 Liverpool

Following a 0-0 first-leg draw at Anfield, the German champions were huge favourites to progress from this European Cup semi-final in the Olympiastadion, particularly as the injury-hit Reds had Colin Irwin and Richard Money deputising for skipper Phil Thompson and Alan Kennedy at the back. When Kenny Dalglish was forced off injured early on inexperienced Scouse striker Howard Gayle was sent on for his European debut, and Bayern struggled to cope with him. With seven minutes to play, stand-in skipper Ray Kennedy put Liverpool ahead and although Karl-Heinz Rummenigge equalised the Reds were off to Paris on away goals where they won a third European Cup.



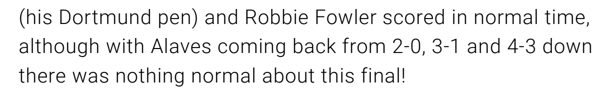




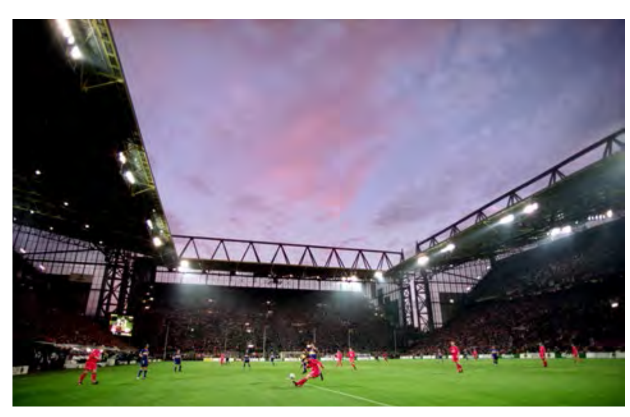
UEFA Cup final 16.05.2001

Liverpool 5-4 Alaves

Liverpool's first visit to Dortmund's atmospheric Westfalenstadion was for the now one-off UEFA Cup final, the Reds' first European final since 1985. Spanish minnows Alaves provided the opposition and with the FA Cup and League Cup already won, Gerard Houllier's side were on the verge of an unprecedented treble. They went on to clinch it in unprecedented style with a 117th minute Delfi Geli golden own goal finally seeing nine-man Alaves off. Markus Babbel, Steven Gerrard, Gary McAllister



(his Dortmund pen) and Robbie Fowler scored in normal time, although with Alaves coming back from 2-0, 3-1 and 4-3 down there was nothing normal about this final!











Champions League 19.09.2001

Borussia Dortmund 0-0 Liverpool

Having never played at Dortmund before, Liverpool evidently enjoyed it so much that they returned four months later to play in front of the Yellow Wall. It was also the Reds' first-ever Champions League away game having not played in the tournament since the European Cup was revamped in the 1990s, but proved to be a damp squib at the rain-soaked Westfalenstadion. Borussia Dortmund came closest to scoring when Stephane Henchoz headed Gregory Vignal's sliced clearance against his own post while Tomas Rosicky also rattled the woodwork, but little else happened – other than seemingly lots of shirt pulling – in an easily forgettable encounter.

Champions League 09.05.2002

Bayer Leverkusen 4-2 Liverpool

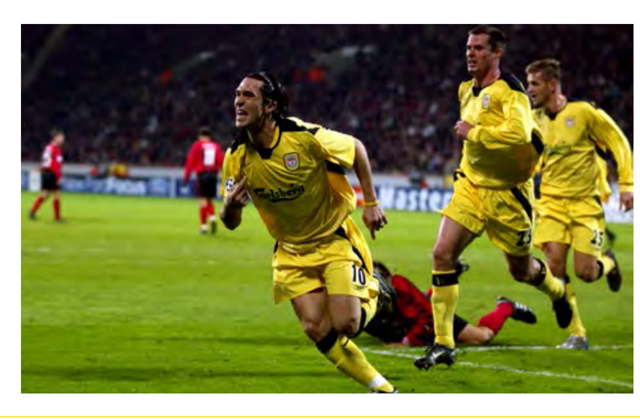
A Sami Hyypia goal gave Gerard Houllier's Reds a slender first-leg advantage to take on their maiden visit to Leverkusen's Bay Arena, but it proved to be a night when a tactical error from the Liverpool manager – who had just returned from life-saving heart surgery – proved costly. Michael Ballack put the hosts ahead before Abel Xavier's equaliser gave the Redmen a crucial away goal, but Houllier's decision to replace Didi Hamann with Vladimir Smicer opened the game up. Ballack and Dimitar Berbatov quickly put the home side 3-1 up and although Jari Litmanen got another away goal that would have been enough to progress, Lucio's 84th minute strike sent Bayer Leverkusen through.



Champions League 09.03.2005

Bayer Leverkusen 1-3 Liverpool

New Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez ended up in a bar with travelling Kopites the night before this Champions League Round of 16 game and they were toasting him at full-time. Although the Reds were 3-1 up from the first leg at Anfield, Bayer Leverkusen had a formidable home record. At least they did until Luis Garcia turned up there. The little man for the big occasion netted twice in the first half to kill the tie and Milan Baros got a third. Jacek Krzynowek struck a late consolation, but Liverpool were well on the road to Istanbul and didn't stop until they got there and lifted a fifth European Cup.



Europa League 18.02.2016

Augsburg 0-0 Liverpool

Jürgen Klopp's first game against German opposition as LFC boss (below) was also Liverpool's first against Augsburg in the restructured Europa League. It was only the hosts seventh ever European match, prompting Klopp to describe it as "the biggest game in Augsburg's history," but with the Reds due to face Manchester City in the Capital One Cup final three days later it wasn't the biggest surprise that a dour affair ensued. Daniel Sturridge missed Liverpool's best chance when he failed to connect with James Milner's pass in the six-yard box and Di-Jong Won struck Simon Mignolet's post late on as it finished goalless in the WWK Arena.

Europa League 07.04.2016

Borussia Dortmund 1-1 Liverpool

A spine-tingling rendition of You'll Never Walk Alone welcomed Jürgen Klopp back to the Westfalenstadion for this Europa League quarter-final first leg. It was Klopp's first return to Borussia Dortmund since leaving the club less than a year earlier and with 36 minutes on the clock Divock Origi silenced the Yellow Wall with the opening goal. Thomas Tuchel's men equalised with a Matts Hummels header from a short corner to set up what became one of Anfield's most famous European nights with Dejan Lovren's last-minute header giving Liverpool an epic 4-3 win.







Champions League 13.03.2019

Bayern Munich 1-3 Liverpool

To put Liverpool's 3-1 win in the Allianz Arena into perspective, Bayern Munich have played 17 games in the Champions League since this 2019 Round of 16 second leg. They've won 16 and drawn one of them, last season becoming the first team to ever lift the trophy with a 100% win record. After a 0-0 first leg draw at Anfield, Sadio Mane was the hero, brilliantly turning away from Manuel Neuer to open the scoring and heading Liverpool's third. Bayern had equalised via a Joel Matip own goal, but Virgil van Dijk's towering header restored the Redmen's advantage and the season would end in glorious fashion. We won it in Madrid...and when you consider that Liverpool have played in Germany during five of their six European Cup winning seasons, perhaps being paired with RB Leipzig in 2021 could be a good omen...





Champions League qualifier 15.08.2017

TSG 1899 Hoffenheim 1-2 Liverpool

Managed by Julian Nagelsmann, now in charge of RB Leipzig, Hoffenheim were tricky opponents for Liverpool to have drawn in this Champions League qualifier, but the Reds recorded an excellent first leg victory at the Rhein-Neckar Arena. Simon Mignolet's 12th minute penalty save was important before Trent Alexander-Arnold – on his European debut – scored his first Liverpool goal with a wonderful free-kick. Havard Nordtveit deflected James Milner's cross into his own net for the Reds' second and while Mark Uth nicked a late goal back, Hoffenheim were beaten 4-2 at Anfield and Liverpool went allez allez allezing all the way to the final in Kiev.


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SION

Interview: William Hughes

Elite development coach VITOR MATOS has been thrilled with the progress of Liverpool's youngsters so far this season. Here he explains how the Reds' philosophy, culture and environment is helping shape the club's future...

Hello Vitor. We have seen a number of young players being handed their first-team debuts this season. That must have made you incredibly proud?
Yes, there is always excitement and joy when you see a young player from the Academy making his debut on the first team and I believe it's a really magical and special moment for the player and for his family and a very proud moment for the club. It's all about the philosophy and the values of the club. When you believe in development and when you believe in the Academy and in talent, you can get the fruits of it. That's Liverpool.

Not only have they played, but they have done really well too...
Unbelievable! They have done incredibly well and they deserve it. When talent works hard you know that you are in the right pathway and that they are too. Now they need to deal with everything around it: the social media, their expectations, the world's expectations and be grateful for the things they can get from it, but also careful about being conceited. Yes, those debuts were an important step in their careers as professional footballers, but they were only the first ones. Now they need to build around it and find consistency in their performances in training and in games, whether that is a first team game or an Under-23s fixture.





“RHYS IS THE KIND OF PLAYER WHERE IT ISN’T THE ENVIRONMENT HE’S IN THAT DEFINES HIM, RATHER IT IS HIM WHO WILL TRY TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THAT ENVIRONMENT”

You clearly work hard on helping prepare the youngsters to be ready for playing first-team football, but it’s still a big leap from Under-23s football?
Yes, it is a big leap but that gap also depends on how good your youth/academy project is, how strong the culture of development in the club is and how strong the connection between the first team and the Academy is. I know that not only myself, but a lot of people across a number of departments work hard every day to ensure that we are providing the players with the best knowledge and opportunities possible and also the right environment for their development. That’s why it’s so important to instil this culture of winning, of overcoming – the culture of always wanting more. The players should have the ambition of reaching the first team, in every training session, in every exercise, and to show desire and commitment in every game. Let me say as well on this that the group of players that you have in the first team is very important too. How they help these young players, how they guide them in difficult moments, how they push them in training sessions and the games. These role models are the best ones to help them in this last step and we are very fortunate in that regard as we have so many great guys in the senior squad who can help the younger players in this way.

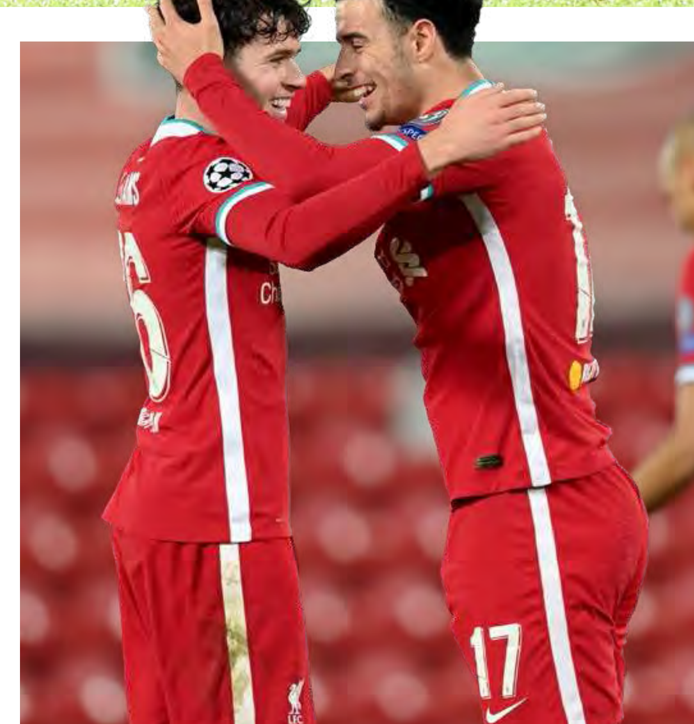
Rhys Williams has done well considering he was playing in the National League North with Kidderminster harries this time last year?
Rhys is the kind of player where it isn’t the environment he’s in that defines him, rather it is him who will try to have an impact on that environment. He has the talent and the character to have a positive impact wherever he is. He had the experience of playing in the National League North and took the best of it. He learned from it, he took what was important for him of that experience and stayed focused on his own development. Of course the leap between the Premier League and the National League North is very big, but he has an outstanding learning capacity and we can see how brilliantly he has handled playing in a pressing and high defensive line. It seems that they were made for each other. Rhys knows his role inside of the team and he knows there is space for improvement and that he needs to keep pushing himself to another level. I believe he is in the right place for that.

Curtis Jones is really starting to make his mark at first-team level and has become an important member of the squad?
Yes, it has been another step in his development and it was a natural and expected one! Curtis has this natural creativity that

can easily produce an opportunity either for himself or for a team-mate. He plays with the same bravery and offensive mentality all over the pitch and he also has the physical ability to survive in every situation in the game. He is the kind of midfielder who always has the goal on his mind. But in the end each single player has an important role in the squad and Curtis is now one of them.

Neco Williams and Curtis teamed up for the only goal in the Champions League group game against Ajax at Anfield, while Caoimhin Kelleher made some important saves in that game too. Young players making such an impact in decisive moments must have been really encouraging for you and the coaches to see?

As for that goal, I think this is one of the advantages when you grow up together in the same team. Having that understanding of each other, the feeling and the anticipation of what the other one is going to do with the ball or without the ball. They learn how to communicate with only a look. I believe it was a moment that fulfilled a lot of dreams and also started new ones, especially for the young kids in the Academy. As for Caoimhin, I believe more than anything it was a compliment for the goalkeeping department and





a big compliment for Caoimhin himself. It was special for the department because the job that they have been doing with the young players is outstanding: the individual work, how they care about each one of them, how they push them on during the training sessions...it's priceless. For Caoimhin it was special because of all the hard work, patience, resilience and perseverance that he has been showing. I believe the relationship, the connection and respect that Alisson, Adrian and Caoimhin have for each other is really important and just shows how well they have been led.

Leighton Clarkson performed well on his Champions League debut and Jake Cain was on the bench for all six group games...

I believe when the relationship between the Academy, the scouting department and the first team is really consistent and fluent, you can keep feeding the first team with talent and young players. Jake and Leighton are further examples of this process and it's great to see players who have been in our club from the age of eight or nine-years-old reach the stage where they are involved with the first team for games in the Champions League.

"WHEN YOU HAVE A MANAGER WHO SAYS, 'THE DOOR FOR THE KIDS WILL ALWAYS BE OPEN', I BELIEVE IT SAYS A LOT ABOUT THE FAITH AND COURAGE THAT HE HAS IN TALENT AND IN YOUNG PLAYERS"

While the young players we have mentioned have performed well, how important is it for them to have a first team manager who is prepared to give young players their chances?
When you have a manager who says, "the door for the kids will always be open," I believe it says a lot about the faith and courage that he has in talent and in young players. Of course you need stability and continuity to create this process naturally, but I believe that when you have this passion for development inside of you, you will always find a way to create a space for young players. In the end let me say it like this – you can have the best youth project and the best talents within your academy, but if the manager doesn't believe in them and doesn't believe in development or in the Academy, you kill the whole process.

You had an input into the design of the new AXA Training Centre. How have you found the first few months at the new facility?
Normally a coach only needs a good pitch and good players to do his job, but when you see the facilities and the resources that we have here, you feel incredible. It's always like this when you move to a new house! At first it is strange and then it enters inside of you. And we are already feeling like it is home. Also in these difficult times its good to have the highest level of conditions and facilities available in the world of football. We have an environment where – even with all the current restrictions because of the pandemic – we feel at home and comfortable and that's a really good sign.

How good has it been to have the Academy players and first team squad so close together on one site?
Right now the pandemic makes it more complicated, but we are already feeling the importance of it. When the whole club comes under one vision, one culture, one philosophy and one place you can create the basis for the future with this sustainability in the club.

Your first season at Liverpool ended with the first team winning their first league title in 30 years. How much have you enjoyed your new role?
To see what winning the Premier League meant for the fans, for the club and for everyone that represented this club before, I was really pleased to be a part of it. For that I only have words of thanks to the manager, to the staff, to the players and to the club.

And what are your ambitions for 2021, both personally and for the club?
I think in the moment that we are living through, my real interest and concern is just that we can all pass through this pandemic and stay healthy and safe.





PHIL IS NEALY 70...

Kevin Keegan isn't the only Liverpool legend who turns 70 this month. Not only is Phil Neal the club's most decorated player winning eight league titles, four European Cups, four League Cups, a UEFA Cup and a Super Cup, the right-back played in 417 consecutive matches in all competitions between 1976 and 1983. Nicknamed 'Zico' by Kopites because he scored 59 goals (38 of them penalties) from full-back, Neal netted in the 1977 and 1984 European Cup finals and also captained the Reds in 1984/85. He reaches his landmark 70th birthday on Saturday 20 February. All the best, Nealy.



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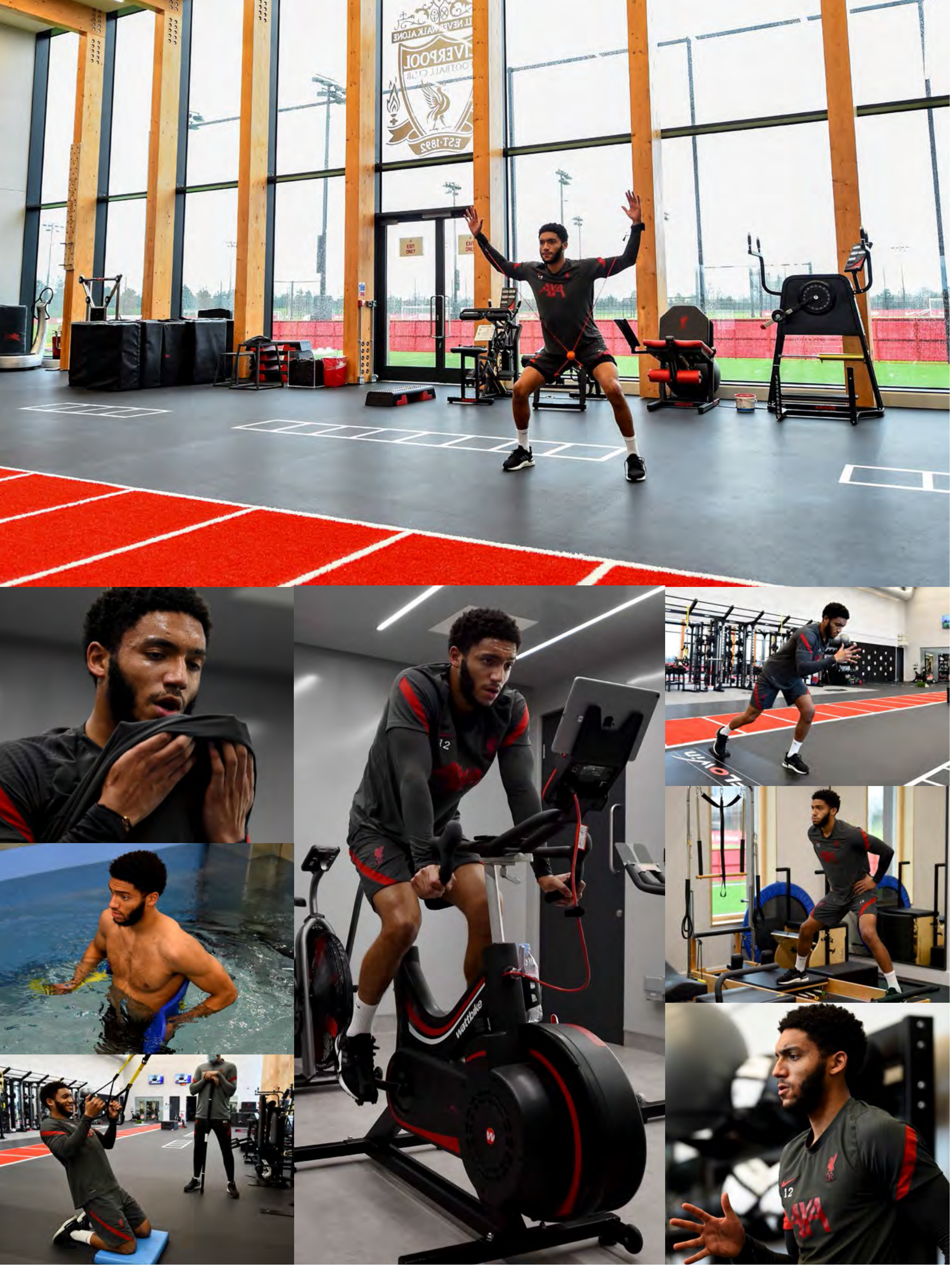


WE ARE LIVERPOOL.
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MAKING PROGRESS

After suffering a serious knee injury in November, **Joe Gomez** is working his way back to fitness at the AXA Training Centre. Club photographer Andrew Powell has been following his rehabilitation...




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Words: William Hughes



YEAR OF THE OX

Chinese New Year will be a special time for Liverpool's legion of supporters in that part of East Asia, particularly as 2021 has been designated as the Year of the Ox! Here's a look at Liverpool FC's links with China and what the club has achieved in the 10 previous Years of the Ox...

OUR OX IS A ROOSTER!

The Chinese New Year runs from 12 February 2021 to 31 January 2022. The animal zodiac runs on a 12-year cycle with the Year of the Ox taking over from the Year of the Rat. In case you were wondering, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain was actually born in 1993...the Year of the Rooster!

1901-1902
19 Feb 1901 to 7 February 1902

The Reds were under the management of Tom Watson and ended the 1900/01 season as champions of England for the first time. Star players of the day included captain Alex Raisbeck, winger Jack Cox and top scorer Sam Raybould, while goalkeeper Bill Perkins, wing-half Bill Goldie and winger Tommy Robertson were all ever-present in that historic league title-winning side as the Reds welcomed in the Year of the Ox in style. The following season saw Liverpool finish 11th in the league, but fans enjoyed the FA Cup first-round meetings with Everton in January 1902 – the first clashes between the Merseyside rivals in the competition. Everton twice came from behind to draw 2-2 at Anfield, but the Reds won the replay at Goodison Park thanks to an own goal by William Balmer and a strike by forward John Hunter.

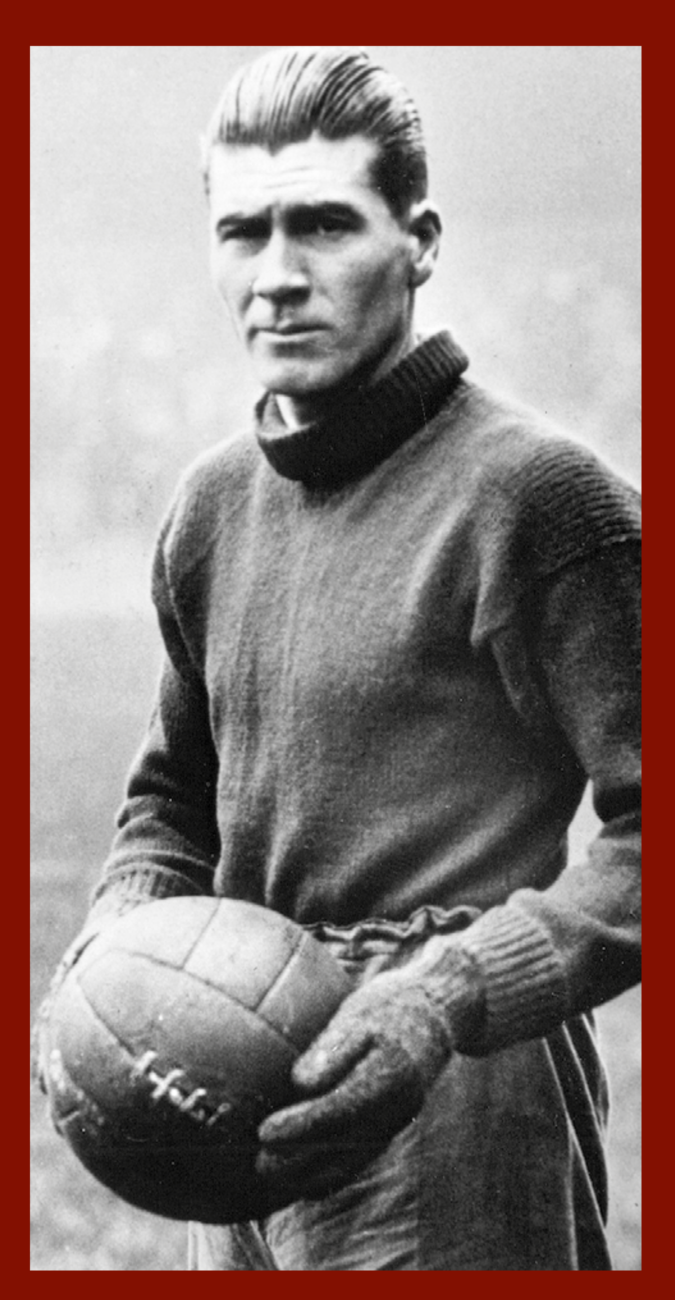


1913-1914
6 Feb 1913 to 25 Jan 1914

The Year of the Ox started with another 2-0 win at Goodison Park, with one of the team's stars, Jack Parkinson, scoring both goals for Tom Watson's men. The Reds, captained by defender Ephraim Longworth, finished the 1912/13 season 11th in the top-flight, wrapping up their campaign with a 5-0 hammering of Bolton Wanderers at Anfield with Parkinson helping himself to a hat-trick. Despite Parkinson's goalscoring heroics, it was forward Arthur Metcalf who finished as the team's leading scorer with 15 league goals and 18 in all competitions. The 1913/14 campaign would of course be the last full season before war broke out. The Reds would again struggle in the league – ending the campaign in 16th position – but the team did show it's quality in reaching the FA Cup final for the first time [they lost 1-0 to Burnley at Wembley].

1925-1926
24 Jan 1925 to 12 Feb 1926

Matt McQueen's men of the mid-Twenties had some gifted players, but were only able to finish fourth in 1924/25 as they struggled to replicate their back-to-back title successes of earlier in the decade. This was the team of Elisha Scott (below), Tommy Lucas, Tom Bromilow, Dick Forshaw, Harry Chambers and captain Donald Mackinlay, but consistency was an issue as the Reds finished eight points adrift of champions Huddersfield Town. They dropped further off the pace in 1925/26 but there were still goals in the team and in September 1925, Liverpool delighted Anfield regulars by putting five past rivals Manchester United and Everton on successive Saturdays, with Forshaw scoring hat-tricks in both games.





1937-1938
11 Feb 1937 to 30 Jan 1938

There was a wind of change blowing through Liverpool Football Club during the late 1930s. The 1936/37 season was the first under new manager George Kay and the team struggled to click, just about avoiding relegation as they finished 18th in Division One. The going continued to be tough during 1937/38 and by the time the Year of the Ox came to a conclusion at the end of January, the team were just one place off the bottom. Keeper Arthur Riley, midfielder Phil Taylor, winger Berry Nieuwenhuys and forward Jack Balmer (above) were all talented players however and by the end of that season they had hauled Kay's team to a mid-table finish.

1949-1950
29 Jan 1949 to 16 Feb 1950

George Kay eventually got things right at Anfield as Liverpool won the first post-World War Two league title in 1946/47. Two years later the Reds had finished in mid-table, but the 1949/50 season looked like being a much brighter one. By the time the Year of the Ox came to an end, the Reds were well placed, sitting top of the table and through to the quarter-finals of the FA Cup. Inspired by the likes of Billy Liddell, Albert Stubbins, Laurie Hughes and Phil Taylor there was an air of optimism around Anfield. There was to be no happy ending however as a spectacular collapse at the end of the season saw Kay's side lose four of their last five league games. And although they reached the FA Cup final, the wait to win that trophy went on too as the badly out-of-form team were beaten 2-0 by Arsenal at Wembley (pictured).

1961-1962
15 Feb 1961 to 4 Feb 1962

Bill Shankly's first full season at the helm had seen Liverpool finish third in Division Two, as their bid to return to the top-flight fell just short. The Scot set about reshaping his team by adding compatriots Ian St John and Ron Yeats in the summer of 1961 and his new-look side soon set about their promotion task in 1961/62. By early February they were three points clear of Leyton Orient at the top

of the table and through to the fifth round of the FA Cup. The cup run came to an end after a three-game saga with Shankly's old side Preston North End, but there was no stopping Liverpool in the league. They took their place back in Division One by finishing eight points clear of Orient at the top, scoring 99 goals in the process. Roger Hunt netted 41 of them with the Saint finding his feet in his new team with 18.

REDMEN V THE CAVE MEN

Had things been different, Liverpool could have visited the Far East in the summer of 2020.

The club had been considering a pre-season tour to the region, with a one-off game in China. The coronavirus pandemic put paid to those plans, but a return to the area at some point seems likely to be on the Reds' radar.

To date, Liverpool have played just one fixture in China, a pre-season friendly against Guangdong Sunray Cave in the southern metropolis of Guangzhou on 13 July 2011 as part of their Asian tour that summer.

At the time, reports claimed Liverpool had 60 million fans on mainland China alone. Announcing the fixture the Reds' then managing director, Ian Ayre, said: "Our football club and the city of Liverpool have great links with China. The city of Liverpool has the oldest Chinese community in Europe. As a global football club, it is important to us that we give our fans in China the chance to see the team in action."

Manager Kenny Dalglish used 23 players in the game with Peter Gulacsi, who is set to line-up against the Reds in the Champions League for RB Leipzig this month and next, starting in goal.

A crowd of 35,000 packed into the Tianhe Stadium and saw Liverpool win an entertaining affair 4-3 thanks to goals from Christian Poulsen, David Ngog, Conor Coady (below) and Andy Carroll.

"Our last tour of Asia in 2009 was a great success and we're delighted to be returning this summer," said Dalglish. "We were delighted to come back to Asia and it is great that we could give our supporters in China the chance to watch the team play."



1973-1974
3 Feb 1973 to 22 Jan 1974

Shankly's second great team ended the 1972/73 season by celebrating another league title – the club's eighth – and the Reds' first European trophy. Shankly used only 16 players in the league triumph with six of them playing in 41 games or more: Ray Clemence, Emlyn Hughes and Kevin Keegan missed just one fixture, while Ian Callaghan, Chris Lawler and Larry Lloyd were all ever-presents. Captain Tommy Smith was also able to lift the UEFA Cup following the Reds' 3-2 aggregate success over Borussia Moenchengladbach, a victory secured off the back of a 3-0 victory at Anfield. Keegan scored twice with both, inevitably, being teed up by his attacking foil John Toshack before he turned provider for the Reds' third which was headed home by Lloyd. Clemence was another of the Reds' heroes, saving a penalty from Jupp Heynckes which would have given the Germans a decisive away goal.





1985-1986
20 Feb 1985 to 8 Feb 1986

The first half of 1985 was a tough time for Liverpool FC. The achievement of reaching a fifth European Cup final in nine seasons was soon overshadowed by the tragic events at Heysel. On the field, the Reds had also lost their grip on the league title with neighbours Everton wrestling it from their clutches. When Paul Wilkinson's goal won the Merseyside derby at Goodison Park on the final day of the season, the Blues' winning margin was 13 points. Joe Fagan called time on his spell as boss and Kenny Dalglish was appointed player-manager, quickly setting about trying to restore the Reds as domestic kings. Steve McMahon (left) was brought in to add steel – and no little skill – to the midfield and by the time this Year of the Ox reached its conclusion, Liverpool were just three points behind Everton in the title race at the two-thirds point of the campaign and still involved in the League and FA Cups. They went on to win the double.

THE **REDS** HAVE HAD A COACHING PRESENCE IN CHINA SINCE 2013

The club's Chinese football Academy officially opened in Guilin City in Southern China with two groups of aspiring young footballers being invited to take part in a special coaching session with Ian Rush.

Olly Dale, LFC's sales director at the time, attended the grand opening and said: "The Liverpool FC International Football Academy will deliver exciting football programmes for players in China and our aim is to provide young players with a platform to show off their potential and learn new skills and techniques in a fun and safe environment.

"We apply the same coaching principles on all our football programmes so when a player plays here at the LFC Guilin Academy, they will be coached in exactly the same way as players are in Liverpool – 'The Liverpool Way'."

In 2018, the Reds renewed their commitment to China by supporting a youth coaching programme in the south west city of Kunming in a long-term partnership with Kunming Municipal Bureau of Education.

Announced at the inaugural China International Import Expo, the partnership sees the Reds continue to deliver football coaching to schoolchildren at the International Academy in Kunming during term-time.

The partnership was unveiled as part of a special signing ceremony at the international trade event hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Chinese government, to highlight the very best of UK-China sports relations.

Since the programme started, hundreds of children from 10 schools across Kunming have gained the opportunity to get active and improve their football skills, developing in the technical, tactical, physical, mental and social aspects of the game through age-specific coaching sessions.

The development has been overseen by LFC International Academy coach, Dan Reece, who is based in Kunming. Local coaches are also involved.

Dan White (pictured), Head of LFC's International Academies, said: "Our International Academy in Kunming has been hugely successful since it launched and has created many fantastic opportunities for young players in China to improve their skills and be developed via our unique coaching system."



1997-1998
7 Feb 1997 to 27 Jan 1998

Liverpool's 1996/97 season was a frustrating one for manager Roy Evans as his side fell just short. They just missed out on a place in the European Cup Winners' Cup final after being eliminated 3-2 on aggregate by Paris Saint-Germain after a pulsating second leg at Anfield. They were also part of the title race until a 2-1 defeat at Wimbledon in their penultimate game ended their challenge and the Reds finished the campaign in fourth position. That defeat by the Dons did provide a ray of hope however with Liverpool's goal being the first scored for the club by teenage sensation Michael Owen. The front pair of Robbie Fowler and Stan Collymore shared 30 league goals and fans enjoyed the attacking football on offer with the strike duo being supplied by the craft of Steve McManaman and John Barnes amongst others. There was also a second successive 4-3 thriller against Newcastle in L4, but ultimately the season again saw Liverpool finish empty-handed.





2009-2010
26 Jan 2009 to 13 Feb 2010

The first half of 2009 saw Rafael Benitez's Liverpool come as close as ever to the Premier League title. A 4-1 win at Old Trafford – just days after thrashing European royalty Real Madrid 4-0 at Anfield in the Champions League – left Kopites hopeful that the Reds could overhaul Manchester United at the top of the table. Ultimately they finished four points behind Alex Ferguson's side, but Liverpool's haul of 86 points was a club-best in the Premier League at the time and fans were proud of the run their team produced in the second half of the campaign, winning 10 of their final 11 games and drawing the other. The Reds were unable to build on such promise however with the summer departure of Xabi Alonso leaving a void that was not filled. By mid-February of 2010 they were well off the pace in the league and also facing the prospect of Europa League fixtures against Romanians Unirea Urziceni having bowed out of the Champions League before Christmas. It would prove to be Benitez's final season as Liverpool manager.

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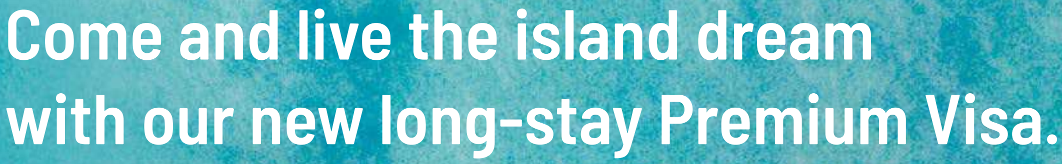
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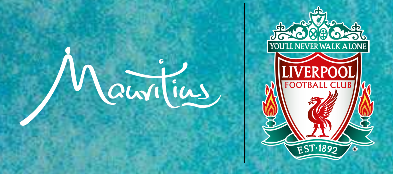
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A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS

End of an era as Vicky Jepson leaves the Reds and Amber Whiteley gets green light for interim role

Liverpool FC Women went into their February fixtures under interim management following the departure of club stalwart Vicky Jepson.

Amber Whiteley, who replaced Emma Humphries as assistant manager in December, took charge for the Reds' first FA Women's Championship fixture of 2021 after it was confirmed that the club and Jepson had parted company by mutual consent.

Jepson had served the Reds in various capacities for almost 12 years. She joined Liverpool in 2009 as LFC Foundation's programme lead for women and girls' football, spreading the message about the women's game.

She spent seven years as a Foundation coach at home and sometimes abroad, taking on extra coaching roles within the women's Academy and working through the age groups. She progressed to the Girls' Centre of Excellence, where she enjoyed five years as LFC Women's development squad manager.

Following a brief spell as assistant manager to Neil Redfearn at the start of the 2018/19 season, she was appointed manager of LFC Women in October 2018.

"It's with a heavy heart that my time has come to an end with Liverpool Football Club; the place I love and have been lucky enough to call home for over a decade," she said.

"Over the years I have been fortunate to work across the entire pathway at this club. During this time, I've seen so many youth players go on to wear the first-team red shirt, which fills me with immense pride. It's been a privilege to have contributed to their careers.

"I'm also grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside the talented people at the LFC Foundation. Seeing the increase of girls' participation in football has been truly inspiring.

"To the many senior players, both past and present, that I've worked with, I thank you. Thank you for empowering me with your relentless efforts, professional attitudes and sacrifices that you make daily as a professional footballer. I will be forever grateful for our time together and will be supporting you all from afar this season."

Jepson reserved a special message for the Liverpool fans who have supported her throughout her journey at the club.

"To the fans, I've travelled around the globe wearing this badge and have witnessed the power of this club," she added. "You are incredible and the reason why LFC is so special. Thank you for your support, our women's team wear that badge with pride and work hard for this club. Please continue to get behind them, they need your support.

"Lastly, thank you for welcoming me into the LFC family all those years ago. I will carry this in my heart for the rest of my life.

"For now, I'll be taking some time out with family, but I'm excited and looking forward to my next challenge in the world of football. See you soon, You'll Never Walk Alone."

The LFC Women's board paid tribute to Jepson's contribution to the club and the wider women's game.

"Everyone at Liverpool FC would like to thank Vicky for her service to the club over more than a decade. We will follow her future endeavours closely and wish her success in everything she does going forward.



"Vicky's legacy here will be the thousands of young girls – both around Liverpool and internationally – whose talent and love for the game flourished under her guidance.

"The football pathway for girls on Merseyside, through our Academy and Regional Training Club, is a hugely positive one and Vicky has played a massive part in that. Her contribution to the Women's first-team set-up and leading the section through tough times is appreciated.

"Now is the time for a fresh direction for us both and we will offer Amber every support as interim manager as we start the search for a permanent replacement."

Prior to her move to the first-team squad before Christmas, Whiteley worked as head coach of the women's Under-21s team and as technical director at the LFC Women Regional Talent Club.

A UEFA A licence coach, she obtained a sports science degree at Northumbria University, where she later became head of women's football while also acting as head coach of Sunderland Ladies Under-21s.

A promotion to assistant first-team coach at Sunderland followed from 2017 to 2019, where she gained valuable experience in the Spring Series and later the Women's Super League.

Prior to joining the Reds in January 2020, Whiteley worked as part of the Football Association's Elite Coaching Menteeships Programme, working in a technical role with England Under-18s alongside ex-Everton manager Mo Marley.

Words: William Hughes

HOLLAND STRENGTHENS **REDS SQUAD**

Liverpool FC Women have added to their midfield options with the deadline day signing of Ceri Holland.

The 23-year-old joins the Reds after spending four years in the USA competing in the college programme at the University of Kansas.

"I'm excited to get here and start with the girls," she said. "It's just an honour really to be representing such a big club. For them to give me this opportunity is just amazing for me and I'm really excited to get going.

"It's a good environment to be in and an environment where I think I can add something to it and help the team with results, hopefully. That's my aim really. I just can't wait to get going now and get on the pitch and start playing football again and represent a great club."

The Welsh youth international, who will wear the no.18 shirt for Liverpool, had moved across the Atlantic after three years in the development programme at Manchester City.

Holland describes herself as 'a box-to-box midfielder' and believes her time in America was important for her development.

She finished her time at the university having started in 75 consecutive games for the Jayhawks. In nine starts during a 2020 season shortened by the COVID-19 pandemic, she won conference Offensive Player of the Week awards three times, providing eight goals and a team-high six assists.

"It was one of the best decisions of my life, honestly, to go out there and just to experience a new culture, a new country and it made me grow a lot, not just as a player but as a person," she said.

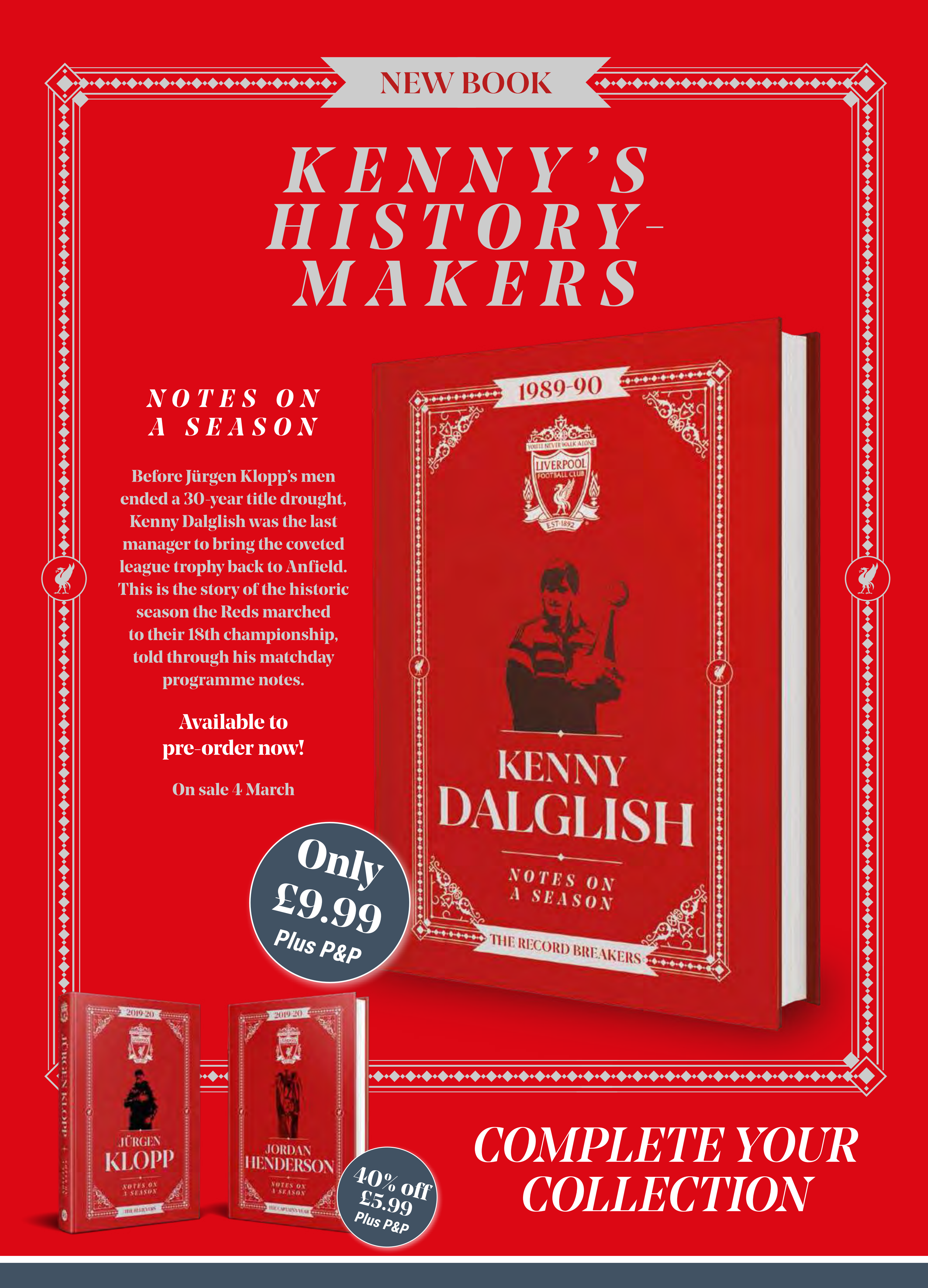
LFC Women interim manager Amber Whiteley said: "We're delighted to welcome Ceri to the club and she will add strength in depth to the playing squad.

"She's an athletic midfield player who brings great energy to the pitch and has a tremendous work ethic. She's also a great person and has values that match those of the club."

Holland was hoping to make her Liverpool debut on Sunday 7 February when the Reds were set to visit Charlton Athletic in an FA Women's Championship fixture.



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WHAT'S ON

FEB/MAR



DERBY DATE

The Reds' frantic fixture list continues into February with one of the highlights being provided by the 238th Merseyside derby.

Liverpool are scheduled to meet the Blues at Anfield on Saturday 20 February (KO 5.30pm) looking to preserve an incredible sequence against their neighbours. The Reds are unbeaten in their last 20 Premier League games against Everton and have not tasted defeat at Anfield against their rivals since September 1999.

The last two games between the sides have taken place at Goodison Park behind closed doors and ended all-square, though Liverpool will have felt aggrieved after the corresponding meeting this season saw them denied a late winner from Jordan Henderson after his effort was controversially ruled out by VAR.

The derby duel against Carlo Ancelotti's side comes either side of testing away trips to RB Leipzig and Sheffield United.


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FEB/MAR

WHAT'S ON



ACADEMY ACTION

The Reds' Under-18s have been challenging at the top of the North section and face a big test on Saturday 27 February. Marc Bridge-Wilkinson's talented side take on Everton in a mini-derby date at Kirkby looking to complete a league double over their rivals. Liverpool ran out 4-0 winners when the teams met at Finch Farm in October. Meanwhile, the Under-23s also have some exciting Friday February fixtures to look forward to with home games against Brighton on the 12th and Arsenal on the 26th sandwiching a trip to Chelsea on the 19th.

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

ANNIVERSARIES

18 years since LFC won the League Cup for the seventh time on 2 March 2003.

30 years since that epic 4-4 draw with Everton in the FA Cup on 20 February 1991.

34 years since John Aldridge scored on his home debut for LFC on 28 February 1987.

43 years since Graeme Souness scored his first LFC goal on 25 February 1978.

56 years since a dramatic FA Cup fifth-round win at Bolton on 20 February 1965.

95 years since Gordon Hodgson made his LFC debut on 27 February 1916.

122 years since Alex Raisbeck scored his first goal for Liverpool on 11 February 1899.

And it's 20 years since Jari Litmanen scored his first Liverpool goal on 10 February 2001.

Liverpool fans had long admired Litmanen, a clever attacker who had shone at Ajax. The feeling was mutual. When he left the Dutch giants on a Bosman transfer for Barcelona 1999, he asked to leave the field to the strains of You'll Never Walk Alone.

In January 2001, Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier brought him to Anfield in a transfer which caused genuine excitement amongst Liverpool supporters.

"We have signed a world-class player. He comes with a massive reputation and I believe he's one of the most exciting signings we have made," said Houllier.

The Finn was on the cusp of his 30th birthday at the time but had struggled with injuries during his spell at the Nou Camp.

Nonetheless, he made a good start to life at Liverpool. Although his debut came from the bench in a 2-1 League Cup semi-final defeat at Crystal Palace, he was part of the starting line-up that won the second leg 5-0 to book a place in the final at Cardiff.

His first Liverpool goal earned a point at Sunderland, cancelling out ex-Red Don Hutchison's opener at the Stadium of Light. The no37 converted from the penalty spot, slotting past Thomas Sorensen after Gary McAllister was adjudged to have been fouled by Black Cats defender Stanislav Varga.

Unfortunately Litmanen, who turns 50 this month, broke his wrist playing for Finland against England at Anfield in late March and was ruled out for the rest of the season.

While he was part of the Liverpool squad that won the treble of League Cup, FA Cup and UEFA Cup, he missed all three finals because of injury.



BIRTHDAYS

Naby Keita 26 on 10 February

Steve McManaman 49 on 11 February

Kevin Keegan 70 on 14 February

Phil Neal 70 on 20 February

Jari Litmanen 50 on 20 February

David Speedie 61 on 20 February

Luis Longstaff 20 on 24 February

Alec Lindsay 73 on 27 February

Djimi Traore 41 on 1 March

Joey Jones 66 on 4 March

Sir Kenny Dalglish 70 on 4 March

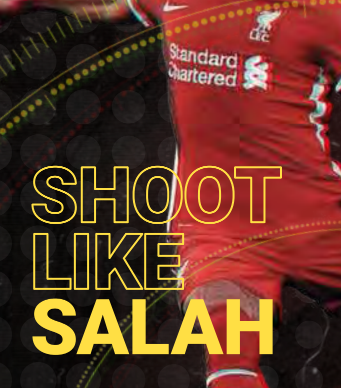
Simon Mignolet 33 on 6 March





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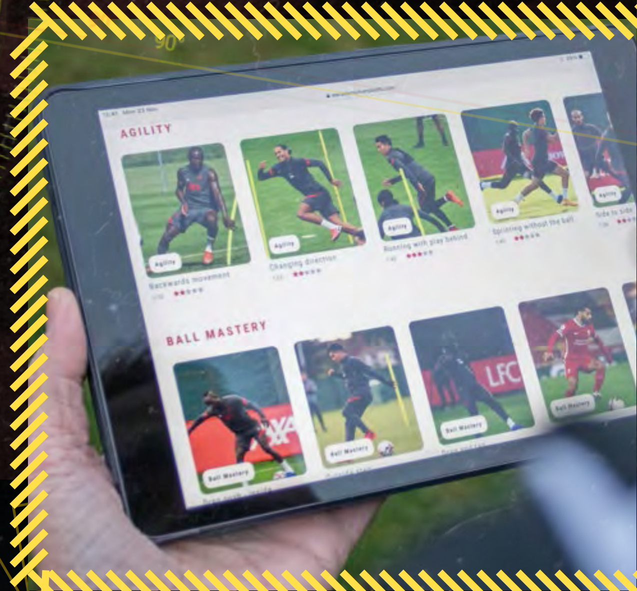


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REMEMBERING BOB

It will be 25 years on St Valentine's Day since Bob Paisley left us. Liverpool FC's most successful manager of all won so many honours than some have been forgotten, such as this 'Merseysider of the Year' award handed to him by the Liverpool Publicity Association in April 1983, shortly before he retired. Nice one, Bob.

WHAT'S IN

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Results & Fixtures 2020/21

AUGUST		SCORE	TV	SCORERS
Sat 29	Arsenal (CS, N)	1-1*	BT	Minamino (pens: Salah, Fabinho, Minamino, Jones)
SEPTEMBER				
Sat 12	Leeds United (H)	4-3	Sky	Salah 3 (2 pens), Van Dijk
Sun 20	Chelsea (A)	2-0	Sky	Mane 2
Thu 24	Lincoln City (Carabao Cup 3, A)	7-2	Sky	Shaqiri, Minamino 2, Jones 2, Grujic, Origi
Mon 28	Arsenal (H)	3-1	Sky	Mane, Robertson, Jota
OCTOBER				
Thu 01	Arsenal (Carabao Cup 4, H)	0-0*	Sky	(pens: Milner, Wijnaldum, Minamino, Jones)
Sun 04	Aston Villa (A)	2-7	Sky	Salah 2
Sat 17	Everton (A)	2-2	BT	Mane, Salah
Wed 21	Ajax (UCL Matchday 1, A)	1-0	BT	Tagliafico (OG)
Sat 24	Sheffield United (H)	2-1	Sky BO	Firmino, Jota
Tue 27	FC Midtjylland (UCL Matchday 2, H)	2-0	BT	Jota, Salah (pen)
Sat 31	West Ham United (H)	2-1	Sky	Salah (pen), Jota
NOVEMBER				
Tue 03	Atalanta (UCL Matchday 3, A)	5-0	BT	Jota 3, Salah, Mane
Sun 08	Manchester City (A)	1-1	Sky	Salah (pen)
Sat 21	Leicester City (H)	3-0	Sky	Evans (OG), Jota, Firmino
Wed 25	Atalanta (UCL Matchday 4, H)	0-2	BT	
Sat 28	Brighton & Hove Albion (A)	1-1	BT	Jota
DECEMBER				
Tue 01	Ajax (UCL Matchday 5, H)	1-0	BT	Jones
Sun 06	Wolverhampton Wanderers (H)	4-0	AP	Salah, Wijnaldum, Matip, Semedo (OG)
Wed 09	FC Midtjylland (UCL Matchday 6, A)	1-1	BT	Salah
Sun 13	Fulham (A)	1-1	Sky	Salah (pen)
Wed 16	Tottenham Hotspur (H)	2-1	AP	Salah, Firmino
Sat 19	Crystal Palace (A)	7-0	BT	Firmino 2, Salah 2, Minamino, Mane, Henderson
Sun 27	West Bromwich Albion (H)	1-1	Sky	Mane
Wed 30	Newcastle United (A)	0-0	AP	
JANUARY				
Mon 04	Southampton (A)	0-1	Sky	
Fri 08	Aston Villa (FA Cup 3, A)	4-1	BT	Mane 2, Wjnaldum, Salah
Sun 17	Manchester United (H)	0-0	Sky	
Thu 21	Burnley (H)	0-1	Sky	
Sat 23	Manchester United (FA Cup 4, A)	2-3	BBC	Salah 2
Thu 28	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	3-1	BT	Firmino, Alexander-Arnold, Mane
Sun 31	West Ham United (A)	3-1	Sky	Salah 2, Wijnaldum
FEBRUARY				
Wed 03	Brighton & Hove Albion (H, 8.15pm)		BT	
Sun 07	Manchester City (H, 4.30pm)		Sky	
Sat 13	Leicester City (A, 12.30pm)		BT	
Tue 16	RB Leipzig (UCL R of 16 1 A, 8pm)		BT	
Sat 20	Everton (H, 5.30pm)		Sky	
Sun 28	Sheffield United (A, 7.15pm)		Sky	
MARCH				
Sat 06	Fulham (H)			
Wed 10	RB Leipzig (UCL R of 16 2 H, 8pm)		BT	
Sat 13	Wolverhampton Wanderers (A)			
Sat 20	Chelsea (H)			
APRIL				
Sat 03	Arsenal (A)			
Tue 06/07	(UCL Q-F 1)		BT	
Sat 10	Aston Villa (H)			
Tue/Wed 13/14	(UCL Q-F 2)		BT	
Sat 17	Leeds United (A)			
Sat 24	Newcastle United (H)			
Tue/Wed 27/28	(UCL S-F 1)		BT	
MAY				
Sat 1	Manchester United (A)			
Tue/Wed 04/05	(UCL S-F 2)		BT	
Sat 08	Southampton (H)			
Tue 11	West Bromwich Albion (A)			
Sat 15	Burnley (A)			
Sun 23	Crystal Palace (H)			
Sat 29	(UCL final)		BT	



All fixtures subject to change. *lost 5-4 on pens



NEIL MELLOR

The standard of The Championship is not as good as the Premier League, but there are still diamonds out there and Ben Davies is a diamond. He will surprise a lot of people

To lose three senior centre-halves to serious injury is incredibly unlucky, but it has created opportunities for other players at Liverpool. Circumstances dictated that Jürgen Klopp needed reinforcements and they have arrived in the shape of Ben Davies and Ozan Kabak.

I've seen a lot of Ben Davies. When I left Preston North End at the end of my career in 2012, Ben was in the youth team. I trained with him a few times and since then I've watched him while covering games for Sky Sports Soccer Saturday.

I saw Ben play on loan at York, I watched him on loan at Fleetwood – where he got his first-ever goal – and I've often seen him at Preston. Where Ben has benefitted more than a lot of young players is that he has been sheltered away from the Academy system.

He's been out and experienced senior football and that has really helped him. At 25 he has played over 250 career games, has learnt a lot and has really developed and matured as a player. He also needs to thank Preston manager Alex Neil as under his management Ben became one of the best central defenders in The Championship.

Yes, the standard of The Championship is not as good as the Premier League, but there are still diamonds out there and Ben Davies is a diamond.

I've felt for 12 or 18 months that he's been good enough to play in the Premier League and I think he will surprise a lot of people who don't watch Championship football. This kid is good enough and I don't think he'll be fazed by being in the Premier League.

He has a confidence about him and is very calm on the ball. He has the ability to play diagonal passes like Virgil van Dijk and is composed in possession, which is crucial as Liverpool dominate the ball in most games. He also knows how to defend.

Davies puts his body on the line, puts his head in the way and can sense danger. He's never going to win a race against Sadio Mane or Mo Salah, but he's not slow and because he reads the game well he positions himself cleverly against pace.





Liverpool play a high defensive line, but he will know when to drop back in and will also benefit from working with the manager, coaching staff and senior players such as Jordan Henderson, James Milner and Andy Robertson, who came to the Reds via a similar route.

Kabak, who arrives from Schalke initially on loan, is a player I have seen less of, but has made almost 60 appearances at Bundesliga level and is a Turkish international. He's highly rated, but at the age of 20 it will be a bigger adjustment for him to play for Liverpool in the Premier League than it will be for Davies.

It will be very interesting to see how Kabak adapts to English football and he may well form a partnership with Davies in time, but I also think Fabinho will continue to be involved at centre-back while Nat Phillips hasn't let anyone down.

He's aggressive, his timing has been there and he handled Michail Antonio really well in the 3-1 win at West Ham having also handled Sebastien Haller well at Anfield in October. Both Spurs and West Ham only had one shot on target in the second half of those away wins when Nat started, which says a lot.

I expect Henderson to play in midfield more often than Fabinho over the coming months. Jordan's leadership is vital out there, especially with no fans inside stadiums, and while he has done brilliantly at centre-half, Liverpool will benefit from him returning to the midfield.

It will also be good to release Fabinho back into midfield, but I anticipate him continuing at the back to help Davies and Kabak settle into life as Liverpool players.

Whether Davies, Kabak or both of them play regularly, they need to take the opportunity.

Liverpool have done alright this season considering Klopp has used 12 different central defensive partnerships and both will benefit from having the best goalkeeper in the world behind them and the best attacking players in world football ahead of them.

For any new player coming in, that gives you a lot of confidence.

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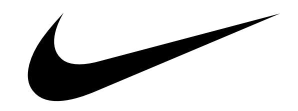
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